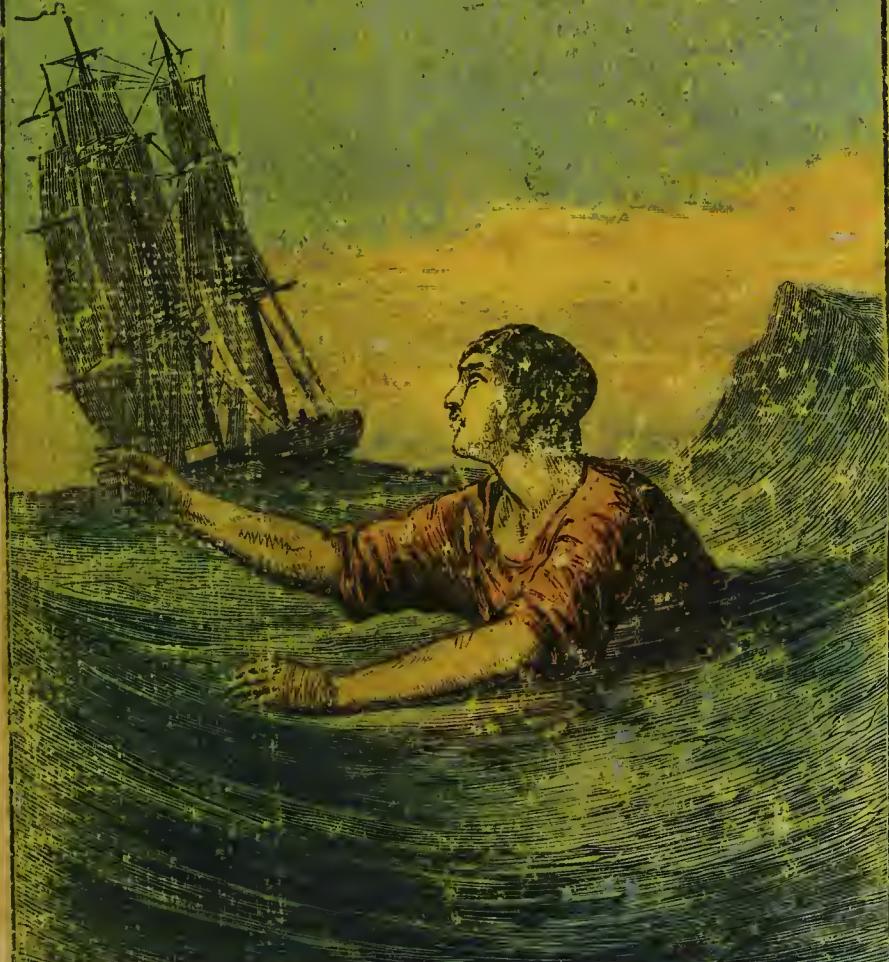




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BY VICTOR HUGO



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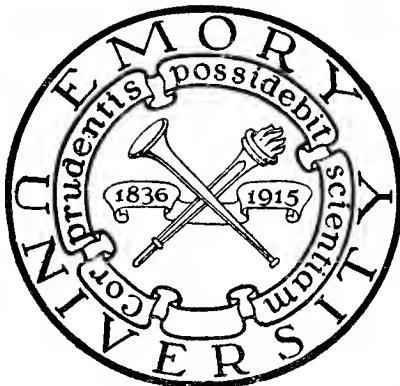
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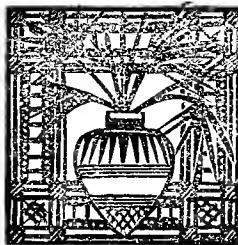
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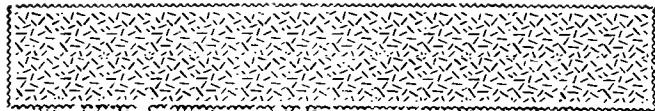
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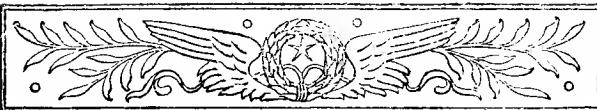


## P R E F A C E.

**S**O long as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilization, artificially creates hells on earth, and complicates a destiny that is divine with human fatality ; so long as the three problems of the age—the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of woman by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night—are not solved ; so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible ; in other words, and from a yet more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this cannot be useless.

**HAUTEVILLE HOUSE.**





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# Les Misérables

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## F A N T I N E

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### Book First

#### THE GOOD BISHOP

##### I.

M. MYRIEL.

IT was in the year 1815, that M. Charles François-Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D——. He was then seventy-five, and had occupied the bishopric of D—— since 1806. Although it does not concern, even in the remotest degree, what we have to relate, it may not be useless, were it only for the sake of exactness in all things, to notice here the reports and gossip which had arisen about him from the time of his arrival in the diocese.

Be it true or false, what is said about men often has as much influence upon their lives, and especially upon their destinies, as what they do.

M. Myriel was the son of a counsellor of the Parlement of Aix; of the rank given to the legal profession. His father, intending him to inherit his place, had contracted a marriage for him at the early age of eighteen or twenty, according to a widespread custom among parliamentary families. Charles Myriel, notwithstanding this marriage, had, it was said, been an object of much attention. His person was admirably moulded; although of slight figure, he was elegant and graceful; all the earlier part of his life had been devoted to the world and to its pleasures. The Revolution came, events crowded upon each other; the parliamentary families, decimated, hunted, and pursued, were soon dispersed. M. Charles Myriel, on the first outbreak of the Revolution, emigrated to Italy. His wife died there of a lung disease with which she had long been threatened. They had no children. What followed in the fate of M. Myriel? The decay of the old French society, the fall of his own family, the tragic sights of '93, still more fearful, perhaps, to the exiles who beheld them from afar, magnified by fright—did these arouse in him ideas of renunciation and of solitude? Was he, in the midst of one of the reveries or emotions which then consumed his life, suddenly attacked by one of those mysterious and terrible blows which sometimes overwhelm, by smiting to the heart, the man whom public disasters could not shake, by aiming at life or fortune? No one could have answered; all that was known was that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804, M. Myriel was curé of B—— (Brignolles). He was then an old man, and lived in the deepest seclusion.

Near the time of the Coronation, a trifling matter of business belonging to his curacy—what it was, is not now known precisely—took him to Paris.

Among other personages of authority he went to Cardinal Fesch on behalf of his parishioners.

One day, when the Emperor had come to visit his uncle,

the worthy curé, who was waiting in the anteroom, happened to be on the way of his Majesty. Napoleon noticing that the old man looked at him with a certain curiousness, turned around and said brusquely :—

“ Who is this goodman who looks at me ? ”

“ Sire,” said M. Myriel, “ you behold a goodman, and I a great man. Each of us may profit by it.”

That evening the Emperor asked the Cardinal the name of the curé, and some time afterwards M. Myriel was overwhelmed with surprise on learning that he had been appointed Bishop of D——.

Beyond this, no one knew how much truth there was in the stories which passed current concerning the first portion of M. Myriel’s life. But few families had known the Myriels before the Revolution.

M. Myriel had to submit to the fate of every new-comer in a small town, where there are many tongues to talk, and but few heads to think. He had to submit, although he was bishop, and because he was bishop. But, after all, the gossip with which his name was connected was only gossip: noise, talk, words, less than words—*palabres*, as they say in the forcible language of the South.

Be that as it may, after nine years of episcopacy and of residence in D——, all these stories, topics of talk, which engross at first petty towns and petty people, were entirely forgotten. Nobody would have dared to speak of, or even to remember them.

When M. Myriel came to D—— he was accompanied by an old lady, Mademoiselle Baptiste, who was his sister, ten years younger than himself.

Their only domestic was a woman of about the same age as Mademoiselle Baptiste, who was called Madame Magloire, and who, after having been the servant of M. le curé, now took the double title of femme de chambre of Mademoiselle and housekeeper of Monseigneur.

Mademoiselle Baptistine was a tall, pale, thin, sweet person. She fully realized the idea which is expressed by the word “respectable;” for it seems as if it were necessary that a woman should be a mother to be venerable. She had never been pretty ; her whole life, which had been but a succession of pious works, had produced upon her a kind of transparent whiteness, and in growing old she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been thinness in her youth had become in maturity transparency, and this etherealness permitted gleams of the angel within. She was more a spirit than a virgin mortal. Her form was shadow-like, hardly enough body to convey the thought of sex—a little earth containing a spark—large eyes, always cast down ; a pretext for a soul to remain on earth.

Madame Magloire was a little, white, fat, jolly, bustling old woman, always out of breath, caused first by her activity, and then by the asthma.

M. Myriel, upon his arrival, was installed in his episcopal palace with the honours ordained by the imperial decrees, which class the Bishop next in rank to the Field-marshal. The Mayor and the President made him the first visit, and he, on his part, paid like honour to the General and the Prefect.

The installation being completed, the town was curious to see its Bishop at work.

## II.

### M. MYRIEL BECOMES MONSEIGNEUR BIENVENU.

THE Bishop's palace at D—— was contiguous to the hospital : the palace was a spacious and beautiful edifice, built of stone, near the beginning of the last century, by Monseigneur Henri Pujet, a doctor of theology of the

Faculty of Paris, abbé of Simore, who was Bishop of D—— in 1712. The palace was in truth a lordly dwelling : there was an air of grandeur about everything, the apartments of the Bishop, the saloons, the chambers, the court of honour, which was very large, with arched walks after the antique Florentine style ; and a garden planted with magnificent trees.

In the dining-hall was a long, superb gallery, which was level with the ground, opening upon the garden ; Monseigneur Henri Pujet had given a grand banquet on the 29th of July, 1714, to Monseigneur Charles Brûlart de Genlis, archbishop, Prince d'Embrun, Antoine de Mesgrigny, capuchin bishop of Grasse, Philippe de Vendôme, grand-prior de France, the Abbé de Saint Honoré de Lérins, François de Berton de Grillon, lord bishop of Vence, Cesar de Sabran de Forcalquier, lord bishop of Glandèvre, and Jean Soanen, priest of the oratory, preacher in ordinary to the King, lord bishop of Senez ; the portraits of the seven reverend personages decorated the hall, and this memorable date, July 29th, 1714, appeared in letters of gold on a white marbletablet.

The hospital was a low, narrow, one-story building with a small garden.

Three days after the Bishop's advent he visited the hospital ; when the visit was ended, he invited the Director to oblige him by coming to the palace.

"Monsieur," he said to the Director of the hospital, "how many patients have you ?"

"Twenty-six, Monseigneur."

"That is as I counted them," said the Bishop.

"The beds," continued the Director, "are very much crowded."

"I noticed it."

"The wards are but small chambers, and are not easily ventilated."

“It seems so to me.”

“And then, when the sun does shine, the garden is very small for the convalescents.”

“That was what I was thinking.”

“Of epidemics we have had typhus fever this year; two years ago we had miliary fever, sometimes one hundred patients, and we did not know what to do.”

“That occurred to me.”

“What can we do, Monseigneur?” said the Director; “we must be resigned.”

This conversation took place in the dining gallery on the ground floor.

The Bishop was then silent a few moments: then he turned suddenly towards the Director.

“Monsieur,” he said, “how many beds do you think this hall alone would contain?”

“The dining-hall of Monseigneur!” exclaimed the Director, stupefied.

The Bishop ran his eyes over the hall, seemingly taking measure and making calculations.

“It will hold twenty beds,” said he to himself; then raising his voice, he said:

“Listen, Monsieur Director, to what I have to say. There is evidently a mistake here. There are twenty-six of you in five or six small rooms: there are only three of us, and space for sixty. There is a mistake, I tell you. You have my house, and I have yours. Restore mine to me; you are at home.”

Next day the twenty-six poor invalids were installed in the Bishop's palace, and the Bishop was in the hospital.

M. Myriel had no property, his family having been impoverished by the Revolution. His sister had a life estate of five hundred francs, which in the vicarage sufficed for her personal needs. M. Myriel received from the Government, as Bishop, a salary of fifteen thousand francs. The

day on which he took up his residence in the hospital building, he resolved to appropriate this sum once for all to charitable uses, leaving for his own personal expenses only 1,000 francs.

*“Schedule for the regulation of my household expenses.*

For the little seminary, fifteen hundred livres.  
Mission congregation, one hundred livres.  
For the Lazaristes of Montdidier, one hundred livres.  
Seminary of foreign missions in Paris, two hundred livres.  
Congregation of the Saint-Esprit, one hundred and fifty livres.  
Religious establishments in the Holy Land, one hundred livres.  
Maternal charitable societies, three hundred livres.  
For that of Arles, fifty livres.  
For the amelioration of prisons, four hundred livres.  
For the relief and deliverance of prisoners, five hundred livres.  
For the liberation of fathers of families imprisoned for debt, one thousand livres.  
Additions to the salaries of poor schoolmasters of the diocese, two thousand livres.  
Public storehouse of Hautes-Alpes, one hundred livres.  
Association of the ladies of D—— of Manosque and Sisteron for the gratuitous instruction of poor girls, fifteen hundred livres.  
For the poor, six thousand livres.  
My personal expenses, one thousand livres.  
Total, fifteen thousand livres.”

M. Myriel made no alteration in this plan during the time he held the see of D——; he called it *the regulation of his household expenses.*

Mademoiselle Baptistine accepted this arrangement with entire submission : M. Myriel was to her at once her brother and her Bishop, her companion by ties of blood and her superior by ecclesiastical authority. She loved and venerated him unaffectedly : when he spoke, she listened; when he acted, she gave him her co-operation. Madame Magloire, however, their servant, grumbled a little. The Bishop had reserved but a thousand francs ; this, added to the income of Mademoiselle Baptistine, gave them a yearly dependence of fifteen hundred francs, upon which the three old people subsisted.

Thanks, however, to the rigid economy of Madame Magloire, and the excellent management of Mademoiselle Baptistine, whenever a curate came to D——, the Bishop found means to extend to him his hospitality.

About three months after the installation, the Bishop said one day: "With all this I am very much cramped." "I think so too," said Madame Magloire : "Monseigneur has not even asked for the sum due him by the department for his carriage expenses in town, and in his circuits in the diocese. It was formerly the custom with all bishops."

"Yes !" said the Bishop ; "you are right, Madame Magloire."

He made his application.

Some time afterwards the Conseil-général took his claim into consideration and voted him an annual stipend of three thousand francs under this head : "Allowance to the Bishop for carriage expenses, and travelling expenses for pastoral visits."

The bourgeoisie of the town were much excited on the subject, and in regard to it a senator of the Empire, formerly a member of the Council of Five Hundred, an advocate of the Eighteenth Brumaire, now provided with a rich senatorial seat near D——, wrote to M. Bigot de Préameneu, Minister of Public Worship, a fault-finding, con-

fidential epistle, from which we make the following extract:—

“Carriage expenses ! What can he want of it in a town of less than 4,000 inhabitants ? Expenses of pastoral visits ! And what good do they do, in the first place ; and then, how is it possible to travel by post in this mountain region ? There are no roads ; he can go only on horseback. Even the bridge over the Durance at Chateau-Arnoux is scarcely passable for ox-carts. These priests are always so ; avaricious and miserly. This one played the good apostle at the outset : now he acts like the rest ; he must have a carriage and post-chaise. He must have luxury like the old bishops. Bah ! this whole priesthood ! Monsieur le Comte, things will never be better till the Emperor delivers us from these macaroni priests. Down with the Pope ! (Matters were getting embroiled with Rome.) As for me, I am for Cæsar alone,” &c., &c., &c.

This application, on the other hand, pleased Madame Magloire exceedingly. “Good,” said she to Mademoiselle Baptistine ; “Monseigneur began with others, but he has found at last that he must end by taking care of himself. He has arranged all his charities, and so now here are three thousand francs for us.”

The same evening the Bishop wrote and gave to his sister a note couched in these terms :

*“Carriage and Travelling Expenses.*

For beef-tea for the Hospital, fifteen hundred livres.

For the Aix Maternal Charity Association, two hundred and fifty livres.

For the Draguignan Maternal Charity Association, two hundred and fifty livres.

For Foundlings, five hundred livres.

For Orphans, five hundred livres.

Total, three thousand livres.”

Such was the budget of M. Myriel.

In regard to the official perquisites, marriage licenses, dispensations, private baptisms, and preaching, consecrations of churches or chapels, marriages, &c., the Bishop gathered them from the wealthy with as much exactness as he dispensed them to the poor.

In a short time donations of money began to come in ; those who had and those who had not, knocked at the Bishop's door ; some came to receive alms and others to bestow them, and in less than a year he had become the treasurer of all the benevolent, and the dispenser to all the needy. Large sums passed through his hands ; nevertheless he changed in nowise his mode of life, nor added the least luxury to his simple fair.

On the contrary, as there is always more misery among the lower classes than there is humanity in the higher, everything was given away, so to speak, before it was received, like water upon thirsty soil ; it was well that money came to him, for he never kept any ; and besides he robbed himself. It being the custom that all bishops should put their baptismal names at the head of their orders and pastoral letters, the poor people of the district had chosen by a sort of affectionate instinct, from among the names of the Bishop, that which was expressive to them, and they always called him Monseigneur Bienvenu. We shall follow their example and shall call him thus; besides, this pleased him. “I like this name,” said he ; “Bienvenu counterbalances Monseigneur.”

We do not claim that the portrait which we present here is a probable one; we say only that it is a true one.

## III.

## GOOD BISHOP—HARD BISHOPRIC.

THE Bishop, after converting his carriage into alms, none the less regularly made his round of visits, and in the diocese of D—— this was a wearisome task. There was very little plain, a good deal of mountain ; and hardly any roads, as a matter of course ; thirty-two curacies, forty-one vicarages, and two hundred and eighty-five sub-curacies. To visit all these is a great labour, but the Bishop went through with it. He travelled on foot in his own neighbourhood, in a cart when he was in the plains, and in a *cacolet*, a basket strapped on the back of a mule, when in the mountains. The two women usually accompanied him, but when the journey was too difficult for them he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, formerly the seat of a bishopric, mounted on an ass. His purse was very empty at the time, and would not permit any better conveyance. The mayor of the city came to receive him at the gate of the episcopal residence, and saw him dismount from his ass with astonishment and mortification. Several of the citizens stood near by, laughing. “Monsieur Mayor,” said the Bishop, “and Messieurs citizens, I see what astonishes you ; you think that it shows a good deal of pride for a poor priest to use the same conveyance which was used by Jesus Christ. I have done it from necessity, I assure you, and not from vanity.”

In his visits he was indulgent and gentle, and preached less than he talked. He never used far-fetched reasons or examples. To the inhabitants of one region he would cite the example of a neighbouring region. In the cantons where the necessitous were treated with severity he would

say, “Look at the people of Briançon. They have given to the poor, and to widows and orphans, the right to mow their meadows three days before any one else. When their houses are in ruins they rebuild them without cost. And so it is a country blessed of God. For a whole century they have not had a single murderer.”

In villages where the people were greedy for gain at harvest time, he would say, “Look at Embrun. If a father of a family, at harvest time, has his sons in the army, and his daughters at service in the city, and he is sick, the priest recommends him in his sermons, and on Sunday, after mass, the whole population of the village, men, women, and children, go into the poor man’s field and harvest his crop, and put the straw and the grain into his granary.” To families divided by questions of property and inheritance, he would say, “See the mountaineers of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard there once in fifty years. Well, now, when the father dies, in a family, the boys go away to seek their fortunes, and leave the property to the girls, so that they may get husbands.” In those cantons where there was a taste for the law, and where the farmers were ruining themselves with stamped paper, he would say, “Look at those good peasants of the valley of Queyras. There are three thousand souls there. Why, it is like a little republic ! Neither judge nor constable is known there. The mayor does everything. He apportions the impost, taxes each one according to his judgment, decides their quarrels without charge, distributes their patrimony without fees, gives judgment without expense ; and he is obeyed, because he is a just man among simple-hearted men.” In the villages which he found without a schoolmaster, he would again hold up the valley of Queyras. “Do you know how they do ?” he would say. “As a little district of twelve or fifteen houses cannot always support a teacher, they have schoolmasters that are paid by the

whole valley, who go around from village to village, passing a week in this place, and ten days in that, and give instruction. These masters attend the fairs, where I have seen them. They are known by quills which they wear in their hat-band. Those who teach only how to read have one quill ; those who teach reading and arithmetic have two ; and those who teach reading, arithmetic, and Latin, have three ; the latter are esteemed great scholars. But what a shame to be ignorant ! Do like the people of Queyras."

In such fashion would he talk, gravely and paternally ; in default of examples he would invent parables, going straight to his object, with few phrases and many images, which was the very eloquence of Jesus Christ, convincing and persuasive.

#### IV.

##### WORKS ANSWERING WORDS.

HIS conversation was affable and pleasant. He adapted himself to the capacity of the two old women who lived with him, but when he laughed, it was the laugh of a schoolboy.

Madame Magloire usually called him *Your Greatness*. One day he rose from his arm-chair, and went to his library for a book. It was upon one of the upper shelves, and as the Bishop was rather short, he could not reach it. "Madame Magloire," said he, "bring me a chair. My greatness does not extend to this shelf."

One of his distant relatives, the Countess of Lô, rarely let an occasion escape of enumerating in his presence what she called "the expectations" of her three sons. She had several relatives, very old and near their death, of whom her sons were the legal heirs. The youngest of the three was to receive from a great-aunt a hundred thousand livres

in the funds ; the second was to take the title of duke from his uncle, the eldest would succeed to the peerage of his grandfather. The Bishop commonly listened in silence to these innocent and pardonable maternal displays. Once, however, he appeared more dreamy than was his custom, while Madame de Lô rehearsed the detail of all these successions and all these “expectations.” Stopping suddenly, with some impatience, she exclaimed, “My goodness, cousin, what are you thinking about?” “I am thinking,” said the Bishop, “of a strange thing which is, I believe, in St. Augustine : ‘Place your expectations on him to whom there is no succession !’”

On another occasion, when he received a letter announcing the decease of a gentleman of the country, in which were detailed, at great length, not only the dignities of the departed, but the feudal and titular honours of all his relatives, he exclaimed : “What a broad back has death ! What a wondrous load of titles will he cheerfully carry, and what hardihood must men have who will thus use the tomb to feed their vanity !”

At times he made use of gentle raillery, which was almost always charged with serious ideas. Once, during Lent, a young vicar came to D——, and preached in the cathedral. The subject of his sermon was charity, and he treated it very eloquently. He called upon the rich to give alms to the poor, if they would escape the tortures of hell, which he pictured in the most fearful colours, and enter that paradise which he painted as so desirable and inviting. There was a retired merchant of wealth in the audience, a little given to usury, M. Géborand, who had accumulated an estate of two millions in the manufacture of coarse cloths and serges. Never, in the whole course of his life, had M. Géborand given alms to the unfortunate ; but from the date of this sermon it was noticed that he gave regularly, every Sunday, a penny to the old beggar women at the door of the cathe-

dral. There were six of them to share it. The Bishop chanced to see him one day, as he was performing this act of charity, and said to his sister with a smile, “See Monsieur Gébórand, buying a pennyworth of paradise.”

When soliciting aid for any charity, he was not silenced by a refusal ; he was at no loss for words that would set the hearers thinking. One day, he was receiving alms for the poor in a parlour in the city, where the Marquis of Chaptencier, who was old, rich, and miserly, was present. The Marquis managed to be, at the same time, an ultra-royalist and an ultra-Voltairean, a species of which he was not the only representative. The Bishop coming to him in turn, touched his arm and said, “Monsieur le Marquis, you must give me something.” The Marquis turned and answered drily, “Monseigneur, I have my own poor.” “Give them to me,” said the Bishop.

One day he preached this sermon in the cathedral :—

“ My very dear brethren, my good friends, there are in France thirteen hundred and twenty thousand peasants’ cottages that have but three openings ; eighteen hundred and seventeen thousand that have two, the door and one window ; and, finally, three hundred and forty-six thousand cabins with only one opening—the door. And this is in consequence of what is called the excise upon doors and windows. In these poor families, among the aged women and the little children, dwelling in these huts, how abundant is fever and disease ! Alas ! God gives light to men ; the law sells it. I do not blame the law, but I bless God. In Isère, in Var, and in the Upper and the Lower Alps, the peasants have not even wheelbarrows, they carry the manure on their backs ; they have no candles, but burn pine knots, and bits of rope soaked in pitch. And the same is the case all through the upper part of Dauphiné. They make bread once in six months, and bake it with the refuse of the fields. In the winter it becomes so hard that they cut it up

with an axe, and soak it for twenty-four hours before they can eat it. My brethren, be compassionate ! behold how much suffering there is around you."

Born a Provençal, he had easily made himself familiar with all the patois of the South. He would say, "*Eh, té ! moussu, sès sagé ?*" as in Lower Languedoc ; "*Onté anaras passa ?*" as in the Lower Alps ; "*Puerte un bowen mow tou embe un bowen froumage grase,*" as in Upper Dauphiné. This pleased the people greatly, and contributed not a little to giving him ready access to their hearts. He was the same in a cottage and on the mountains as in his own house. He could say the grandest things in the most common language ; and as he spoke all dialects his words entered the souls of all.

Moreover, his manners with the rich were the same as with the poor.

He condemned nothing hastily, or without taking account of circumstances. He would say, "Let us see the way in which the fault came to pass."

Being, as he smilingly described himself, an *ex-sinner*, he had none of the inaccessibility of a rigorist, and boldly professed, even under the frowning eyes of the ferociously virtuous, a doctrine which may be stated nearly as follows :—

"Man has a body which is at once his burden and his temptation. He drags it along, and yields to it.

"He ought to watch over it, to keep it in bounds ; to repress it, and only to obey it at the last extremity. It may be wrong to obey even then, but if so, the fault is venial. It is a fall, but a fall upon the knees, which may end in prayer.

"To be a saint is the exception ; to be upright is the rule. Err, falter, sin, but be upright.

"To commit the least possible sin is the law for man. To live without sin is the dream of an angel.

Everything terrestrial is subject to sin. Sin is a gravitation."

When he heard many exclaiming, and expressing great indignation against anything, "Oh ! oh !" he would say, smiling, "it would seem that this is a great crime, of which they are all guilty. How frightened hypocrisy hastens to defend itself, and to get under cover."

He was indulgent towards women, and towards the poor, upon whom the weight of society falls most heavily ; and said : "The faults of women, children, and servants, of the feeble, the indigent, and the ignorant, are the faults of their husbands, fathers, and masters, of the strong, the rich, and the wise." At other times, he said, "Teach the ignorant as much as you can ; society is culpable in not providing instruction for all, and it must answer for the night which it produces. If the soul is left in darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness."

As we see, he had a strange and peculiar way of judging things. I suspect that he acquired it from the Gospel.

In company one day he heard an account of a criminal case that was about to be tried. A miserable man, through love for a woman and for the child she had borne him, had been making false coin, his means being exhausted. At that time counterfeiting was still punished with death. The woman was arrested for passing the first piece that he had made. She was held a prisoner, but there was no proof against her lover. She alone could testify against him, and convict him by her confession. She denied his guilt. They insisted, but she was obstinate in her denial. In this state of the case, the *procureur du roi* devised a shrewd plan. He represented to her that her lover was unfaithful, and by means of fragments of letters skilfully put together, succeeded in persuading the unfortunate woman that she had a rival, and that this man had deceived her. At once exas-

perated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed all, and proved his guilt. He was to be tried in a few days, at Aix, with his accomplice, and his conviction was certain. The story was told, and everybody was in ecstasy at the adroitness of the officer. In bringing jealousy into play, he had brought truth to light by means of anger, and justice had sprung from revenge. The Bishop listened to all this in silence. When it was finished he asked:

“Where are this man and woman to be tried?”

“At the Assizes.”

“And where is the *procureur du roi* to be tried?”

A tragic event occurred at D——. A man had been condemned to death for murder. The unfortunate prisoner was a poorly educated, but not entirely ignorant man, who had been a juggler at fairs, and a public letter-writer. The people were greatly interested in the trial. The evening before the day fixed for the execution of the condemned, the almoner of the prison fell ill. A priest was needed to attend the prisoner in his last moments. The curé was sent for, but he refused to go, saying, “That does not concern me. I have nothing to do with such drudgery, or with that mountebank; besides, I am sick myself; and, moreover, it is not my place.” When this reply was reported to the Bishop he said, “The curé is right. It is not his place, it is mine.”

He went, on the instant, to the prison, went down into the dungeon of the “mountebank,” called him by his name, took him by the hand, and talked with him. He passed the whole day with him, forgetful of food and sleep, praying to God for the soul of the condemned, and exhorting the condemned to join with him. He spoke to him the best truths, which are the simplest. He was father, brother, friend; bishop for blessing only. He taught him everything by encouraging and consoling him. This man would have died in despair. Death, for him, was like an abyss. Standing shivering upon the dreadful brink, he recoiled

with horror. He was not ignorant enough to be indifferent. The terrible shock of his condemnation had in some sort broken here and there that wall which separates us from the mystery of things beyond, and which we call life. Through these fatal breaches, he was constantly looking beyond this world, and he could see nothing but darkness ; the Bishop showed him the light.

On the morrow, when they came for the poor man, the Bishop was with him. He followed him, and showed himself to the eyes of the crowd in his violet camail, with his bishop's cross about his neck, side by side with the miserable being, who was bound with cords.

He mounted the cart with him, he ascended the scaffold with him. The sufferer, so gloomy and so horror-stricken in the evening, was now radiant with hope. He felt that his soul was reconciled, and he trusted in God. The Bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the axe was about to fall, he said to him, "Whom man kills, him God restoreth to life ; whom his brethren put away, he findeth the Father. Pray, believe, enter into life ! The Father is there." When he descended from the scaffold, something in his look made the people fall back. It would be hard to say which was the most wonderful, his paleness or his serenity. As he entered the humble dwelling which he smilingly called his *palace*, he said to his sister, "I have been officiating pontifically."

As the most sublime things are often least comprehended, there were those in the city who said, in commenting upon the Bishop's conduct, that it was affectation, but such ideas were confined to the upper classes. The people who do not look for unworthy motives in holy works, admired and were softened.

As to the Bishop, the sight of the guillotine was a shock to him from which it was long before he recovered.

The scaffold, indeed, when it is prepared and set up, has

the effect of a hallucination. We may be indifferent to the death penalty, and may not declare ourselves, yes or no, so long as we have not seen a guillotine with our own eyes. But when we see one, the shock is violent, and we are compelled to decide and take part, for or against. Some admire it, like Le Maistre ; others execrate it, like Beccaria. The guillotine is the concretion of the law ; it is called the Avenger ; it is not neutral, and does not permit you to remain neutral. He who sees it quakes with the most mysterious of tremblings. All social questions set up their points of interrogation about this axe. The scaffold is vision. The scaffold is not a mere frame, the scaffold is not a machine, the scaffold is not an inert piece of mechanism made of wood, of iron, and of ropes. It seems a sort of being which had some sombre origin of which we can have no idea ; one would say that this frame sees, that this machine understands, that this mechanism comprehends ; that this wood, this iron, and these ropes, have a will. In the fearful reverie into which its presence casts the soul, the awful apparition of the scaffold confounds itself with its horrid work. The scaffold becomes the accomplice of the executioner ; it devours, it eats flesh, and it drinks blood. The scaffold is a sort of monster created by the judge and the workman, a spectre which seems to live with a kind of unspeakable life, drawn from all the death which it has wrought.

Thus the impression was horrible and deep : on the morrow of the execution, and for many days, the Bishop appeared to be overwhelmed. The almost violent calmness of the fatal moment had disappeared ; the phantom of social justice took possession of him. He, who ordinarily looked back upon all his actions with a satisfaction so radiant, now seemed to be a subject of self-reproach. By times he would talk to himself, and in an undertone mutter dismal monologues. One evening his sister overheard and

preserved the following : “ I did not believe that it could be so monstrous. It is wrong to be so absorbed in the divine law as not to perceive the human law. Death belongs to God alone. By what right do men touch that unknown thing ? ”

With the lapse of time these impressions faded away, and were probably effaced. Nevertheless it was remarked that the Bishop ever after avoided passing by the place of execution.

M. Myriel could be called at all hours to the bedside of the sick and the dying. He well knew that there was his highest duty and his greatest work. Widowed or orphan families had no need to send for him ; he came of himself. He would sit silent for long hours by the side of a man who had lost the wife whom he loved, or of a mother who had lost her child. As he knew the time for silence, he knew also the time for speech. Oh, admirable consoler ! he did not seek to drown grief in oblivion, but to exalt and to dignify it by hope. He would say, “ Be careful of the way in which you think of the dead. Think not of what might have been. Look steadfastly and you shall see the living glory of your well-beloved dead in the depths of heaven.” He believed that faith is healthful. He sought to counsel and to calm the despairing man by pointing out to him the man of resignation, and to transform the grief which looks down into the grave by showing it the grief which looks up to the stars.

## V

## HOW MONSEIGNEUR BIENVENU MADE HIS CASSOCK LAST SO LONG.

THE private life of M. Myriel was full of the same thoughts as his public life. To one who could have seen it on the spot, the voluntary poverty in which the Bishop of D—— lived, would have been a serious as well as a pleasant sight,

Like all old men, and like most thinkers, he slept but little, but that little was sound. In the morning he devoted an hour to meditation, and then said mass, either at the cathedral, or in his own house. After mass he took his breakfast of rye bread and milk, and then went to work.

A Bishop is a very busy man ; he must receive the report of the clerk of the diocese, ordinarily a prebendary, every day, and nearly every day his grand vicars. He has congregations to superintend, licenses to grant, all ecclesiastical bookselling to examine, parish and diocesan catechisms, prayer-books, &c., charges to write, preachings to authorize, curés and mayors to make peace between, a clerical correspondence, an administrative correspondence, on the one hand the Government, on the other the Holy See, a thousand matters of business.

What time these various affairs and his devotions and his breviary left him, he gave first to the needy, the sick, and the afflicted ; what time the afflicted, the sick, and the needy left him, he gave to labour. Sometimes he used a spade in his garden, and sometimes he read and wrote. He had but one name for these two kinds of labour ; he called them gardening. “The spirit is a garden,” said he.

Towards noon, when the weather was good, he would go out and walk in the fields, or in the city, often visiting the cottages and cabins. He would be seen plodding along, wrapt in his thoughts, his eyes bent down, resting upon his long cane, wearing his violet doublet, wadded so as to be very warm, violet stockings and heavy shoes, and his flat hat, from the three corners of which hung the three golden grains of spikenard.

His coming made a fête. One would have said that he dispensed warmth and light as he passed along. Old people and children would come to their doors for the Bishop as they would for the sun. He blessed, and was

blessed in return. Whoever was in need of anything was shown the way to his house.

Now and then he would stop and talk to the little boys and girls, and give a smile to their mothers. When he had money his visits were to the poor; when he had none, he visited the rich.

As he made his cassock last a very long time, in order that it might not be perceived, he never went out into the city without his violet doublet. In summer this was rather irksome.

On his return he dined. His dinner was like his breakfast.

At half-past eight in the evening he took supper with his sister, Madame Magloire standing behind them and waiting on the table. Nothing could be more frugal than this meal. If, however, the Bishop had one of his curés to supper, Madame Magloire improved the occasion to serve her master with some excellent fish from the lakes, or some fine game from the mountain. Every curé was a pretext for a fine meal; the Bishop did not interfere. With these exceptions, there was rarely seen upon his table more than boiled vegetables, or bread warmed with oil. And so it came to be a saying in the city, "When the Bishop does not entertain a curé, he entertains a Trappist."

After supper he would chat for half an hour with Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire, and then go to his own room and write, sometimes upon loose sheets, sometimes on the margin of one of his folios. He was a well-read and even a learned man. He has left five or six very curious manuscripts behind him; among them is a dissertation upon this passage in Genesis:—*In the beginning the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* He contrasts this with three other versions—the Arabic, which has, *the winds of God blew;* Flavius Josephus, who says, *a wind from on high fell upon all the earth;* and finally the Chaldean

paraphrase of Onkelos, which reads, *a wind coming from God blew upon the face of the waters.* In another dissertation, he examines the theological works of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, a distant relative of the writer of this book, and proves that sundry little tracts, published in the last century under the pseudonym of Barleycourt, should be attributed to that prelate.

Sometimes in the midst of his reading, no matter what book he might have in his hands, he would suddenly fall into deep meditation, and when it was over, would write a few lines on whatever page was open before him. These lines often have no connection with the book in which they are written. We have under our own eyes a note written by him upon the margin of a quarto volume entitled, “*Correspondance du Lord Germain avec les généraux Clinton, Cornwallis, et les amiraux de la Station de l'Amérique. A Versailles, chez Poinçot, Libraire, et à Paris, chez Pissot, Quai des Augustins.*”

And this is the note:—

“ O Thou who art !

“ Ecclesiastes names thee the Almighty ; Maccabees names thee Creator ; the Epistle to the Ephesians names thee Liberty ; Baruch names thee Immensity ; the Psalms name thee Wisdom and Truth ; John names thee Light ; the Book of Kings names thee Lord ; Exodus calls thee Providence ; Leviticus, Holiness ; Esdras, Justice ; Creation calls thee God ; man names thee Father ; but Solomon names thee Compassion, and that is the most beautiful of all thy names.”

Towards nine o'clock in the evening the two women were accustomed to retire to their chambers in the second story, leaving him until morning alone upon the lower floor.

Here it is necessary that we should give an exact idea of the dwelling of the Bishop.

## VI.

## HOW HE PROTECTED HIS HOUSE.

THE house which he occupied consisted, as we have said, of a ground floor and a second story ; three rooms on the ground floor, three on the second story, and an attic above. Behind the house was a garden of about a quarter of an acre. The two women occupied the upper floor ; the Bishop lived below. The first room, which opened upon the street, was his dining-room, the second was his bedroom, and the third his oratory. You could not leave the oratory without passing through the bedroom, and to leave the bedroom you must pass through the dining-room. At one end of the oratory there was an alcove closed in, with a bed for occasions of hospitality. The Bishop kept this bed for the country curés when business or the wants of their parish brought them to D——.

The pharmacy of the hospital, a little building adjoining the house and extending into the garden, had been transformed into a kitchen and cellar.

There was also a stable in the garden, which was formerly the hospital kitchen, where the Bishop now kept a couple of cows, and invariably, every morning, he sent half the milk they gave to the sick at the hospital. “I pay my tithes,” said he.

His room was quite large, and was difficult to warm in bad weather. As wood is very dear at D——, he conceived the idea of having a room partitioned off from the cow-stable with a tight plank ceiling. In the coldest weather he passed his evenings there, and called it his *winter parlour*.

In this winter parlour, as in the dining-room, the only furniture was a square white wooden table, and four straw

chairs. The dining-room, however, was furnished with an old sideboard stained red. A similar sideboard, suitably draped with white linen and imitation lace, served for the altar which decorated the oratory.

His rich penitents and the pious women of D—— had often contributed the money for a beautiful new altar for Monseigneur's oratory; he had always taken the money and given it to the poor. "The most beautiful of altars," said he, "is the soul of an unhappy man who is comforted and thanks God."

In his oratory he had two prie-dieu straw chairs, and an arm-chair, also of straw, in the bedroom. When he happened to have seven or eight visitors at once, the prefect, or the general, or the major of the regiment in the garrison, or some of the pupils of the little seminary, he was obliged to go to the stable for the chairs that were in the winter parlour, to the oratory for the prie-dieu, and to the bedroom for the arm-chair; in this way he could get together as many as eleven seats for his visitors. At each new visit a room was stripped.

It happened sometimes that there were twelve; then the Bishop concealed the embarrassment of the situation by standing before the fire if it were winter, or by walking in the garden if it were summer.

There was another chair in the strangers' alcove, but it had lost half its straw, and had but three legs, so that it could be used only when standing against the wall. Mademoiselle Baptistine had also, in her room, a very large wooden easy-chair, that had once been gilded and covered with flowered silk, but as it had to be taken into her room through the window, the stairway being too narrow, it could not be counted among the movable furniture.

It had been the ambition of Mademoiselle Baptistine to be able to buy a parlour lounge, with cushions of Utrecht velvet, roses on a yellow ground, while the mahogany should

be in the form of swans' necks. But this would have cost at least five hundred francs, and as she had been able to save only forty-two francs and ten sous for the purpose in five years, she had finally given it up. But who ever does attain to his ideal?

Nothing could be plainer in its arrangements than the Bishop's bed-chamber. A window, which was also a door, opening upon the garden ; facing this, the bed, an iron hospital bed, with green serge curtains ; in the shadow of the bed, behind a screen, the toilet utensils, still betraying the elegant habits of the man of the world ; two doors, one near the chimney, leading into the oratory, the other near the bookcase, opening into the dining-room. The bookcase, a large closet with glass doors, filled with books ; the fireplace, cased with wood painted to imitate marble, usually without fire ; in the fireplace, a pair of andirons ornamented with two vases of flowers, once plated with silver, which was a kind of episcopal luxury ; above the fireplace, a copper crucifix, from which the silver was worn off, fixed upon a piece of threadbare black velvet in a wooden frame from which the gilt was almost gone ; near the window, a large table with an inkstand, covered with confused papers and heavy volumes. In front of the table was the straw arm-chair, and before the bed, a prie-dieu from the oratory.

Two portraits in oval frames hung on the wall on either side of the bed. Small gilt inscriptions upon the background of the canvas indicated that the portraits represented, one, the Abbé de Chaliot, bishop of Saint Claude, the other, the Abbé Tourteau, vicar-general of Agde, abbé of Grand-champs, order of Citeaux, diocese of Chartres. The Bishop found these portraits when he succeeded to the hospital patients in this chamber, and left them untouched. They were priests, and probably donors to the hospital—two reasons why he should respect them. All

that he knew of these two personages was that they had been named by the king, the one to his bishopric, the other to his living, on the same day, the 27th of April, 1785. Madame Magloire having taken down the pictures to wipe off the dust, the Bishop had found this circumstance written in a faded ink upon a little square piece of paper, yellow with time, stuck with four wafers on the back of the portrait of the Abbé of Grand-champs.

He had at his window an antique curtain of coarse woollen stuff, which finally became so old that, to save the expense of a new one, Madame Magloire was obliged to put a large patch in the very middle of it. This patch was in the form of a cross. The Bishop often called attention to it. "How fortunate that is," he would say.

Every room in the house, on the ground floor as well as in the upper story, without exception, was whitewashed, as is the custom in barracks and in hospitals.

However, in later years, as we shall see by-and-by, Madame Magloire found, under the wall-paper, some paintings, which decorated the apartment of Mademoiselle Baptistine. Before it was a hospital, the house had been a sort of gathering-place for the citizens, at which time these decorations were introduced. The floors of the chambers were paved with red brick, which were scoured every week, and before the beds straw matting was spread. In all respects the house was kept by the two women exquisitely neat from top to bottom. This was the only luxury that the Bishop would permit. He would say, "*That takes nothing from the poor.*"

We must confess that he still retained of what he had formerly, six silver dishes and a silver soup-ladle, which Madame Magloire contemplated every day with new joy as they shone on the coarse, white, linen table-cloth. And as we are drawing the portrait of the Bishop of D—— just as he was, we must add that he had said, more than once,

"It would be difficult for me to give up eating from silver."

With this silver ware should be counted two large, massive silver candlesticks which he inherited from a great-aunt. These candlesticks held two wax-candles, and their place was upon the Bishop's mantel. When he had any one to dinner, Madame Magloire lighted the two candles and placed the two candlesticks upon the table.

There was in the Bishop's chamber, at the head of his bed, a small cupboard, in which Madame Magloire placed the six silver dishes and the great ladle every evening. But the key was never taken out of it.

The garden, which was somewhat marred by the unsightly structures of which we have spoken, was laid out with four walks, crossing at the drain-well in the centre. There was another walk round the garden, along the white wall which enclosed it. These walks left four square plats, which were bordered with box. In three of them Madame Magloire cultivated vegetables; in the fourth the Bishop had planted flowers, and here and there were a few fruit trees. Madame Magloire once said to him, with a kind of gentle reproach: "Monseigneur, you are always anxious to make everything useful, but yet here is a plat that is of no use. It would be much better to have salads there than bouquets." "Madame Magloire," replied the Bishop, "you are mistaken. The beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added, after a moment's silence, "perhaps more so."

This plat, consisting of three or four beds, occupied the Bishop nearly as much as his books. He usually passed an hour or two there, trimming, weeding, and making holes here and there in the ground, and planting seeds. He was as much averse to insects as a gardener would have wished. He made no pretensions to botany, and knew nothing of groups or classification; he did not care in the

least to decide between Tournefort and the natural method ; he took no part, either for the utricles against the cotyledons, or for Jussieu against Linnaeus. He did not study plants, he loved flowers. He had much respect for the learned, but still more for the ignorant ; and, while he fulfilled his duty in both these respects, he watered his beds every summer evening with a tin watering-pot painted green.

Not a door in the house had a lock. The door of the dining-room, which, we have mentioned, opened into the cathedral grounds, was formerly loaded with bars and bolts like the door of a prison. The Bishop had had all this iron-work taken off, and the door, by night as well as by day, was closed only with a latch. The passer-by, whatever might be the hour, could open it with a simple push. At first the two women had been very much troubled at the door being never locked ; but Monseigneur de D—— said to them : “Have bolts on your own doors, if you like.” They shared his confidence at last, or at least acted as if they shared it. Madame Magloire alone had occasional attacks of fear. As to the Bishop, the reason for this is explained, or at least pointed at in these three lines written by him on the margin of a Bible : “This is the shade of meaning : the door of a physician should never be closed ; the door of a priest should always be open.”

In another book, entitled *Philosophie de la Science Médicale*, he wrote this further note : “Am I not a physician as well as they ? I also have my patients ; first I have theirs, whom they call the sick ; and then I have my own, whom I call the unfortunate.”

Yet again he had written : “Ask not the name of him who asks you for a bed. It is especially he whose name is a burden to him who has need of an asylum.”

It occurred to a worthy curé, I am not sure whether it was the curé of Couloubroux or the curé of Pompierry,

to ask him one day, probably at the instigation of Madame Magloire, if Monseigneur were quite sure that there was not a degree of imprudence in leaving his door, day and night, at the mercy of whoever might wish to enter, and if he did not fear that some evil would befall a house so poorly defended. The Bishop touched him gently on the shoulder and said, in the words of Scripture : “ Unless God protects a house, they who guard it watch in vain.”

And then he changed the subject.

He very often said : “ There is a bravery for the priest as well as a bravery for the colonel of dragoons. Only,” added he, “ ours should be quiet.”

## VII.

### CRAVATTE.

THIS is the proper place for an incident which we must not omit, for it is one of those which most clearly shows what manner of man the Bishop of D—— was.

After the destruction of the band of Gaspard Bès, which had infested the gorges of Ollivolles, one of his lieutenants, Cravatte, took refuge in the mountains. He concealed himself for some time with his bandits, the remnant of the troop of Gaspard Bès, in the county of Nice, then made his way to Piedmont, and suddenly reappeared in France in the neighbourhood of Barcelonnette. He was first seen at Jauziers, then at Tuiles. He concealed himself in the caverns of the Joug de l’Aigle, from which he made descents upon the hamlets and villages by the ravines of Ubaye and Ubayette.

He even pushed as far as Embrun, and one night broke into the cathedral and stripped the sacristy. His robberies

desolated the country. The gendarmes were put upon his trail, but in vain. He always escaped; sometimes by forcible resistance. He was a bold wretch. In the midst of all this terror, the Bishop arrived. He was making his visit to Chastelar. The mayor came to see him, and urged him to turn back. Cravatte held the mountains as far as Arche, and beyond; it would be dangerous, even with an escort. It would expose three or four poor gendarmes to useless danger.

"And so," said the Bishop, "I intend to go without an escort."

"Do not think of such a thing," exclaimed the Mayor.

"I think so much of it, that I absolutely refuse the gendarmes, and I am going to start in an hour."

"To start?"

"To start."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Monseigneur, you will not do it."

"There is on the mountain," replied the Bishop, "a humble little commune, that I have not seen for three years; and they are good friends of mine, kind and honest peasants. They own one goat out of thirty that they pasture. They make pretty woollen thread of various colours, and they play their mountain airs upon small six-holed flutes. They need some one occasionally to tell them of the goodness of God. What would they say of a Bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I should not go there?"

"But, Monseigneur, the brigands?"

"True," said the Bishop, "I am thinking of that. You are right. I may meet them. They too must need some one to tell them of the goodness of God."

"Monseigneur, but it is a band! a pack of wolves!"

"Monsieur Mayor, perhaps Jesus has made me the

keeper of that very flock. Who knows the ways of Providence?"

"Monseigneur, they will rob you."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"A simple old priest who passes along muttering his prayer? No, no; what good would it do them?"

"Oh, my good Sir, suppose you should meet them!"

"I should ask them for alms for my poor."

"Monseigneur, do not go. In the name of Heaven! you are exposing your life."

"Monsieur Mayor," said the Bishop, "that is just it. I am not in the world to care for my life, but for souls."

He would not be dissuaded. He set out, accompanied only by a child, who offered to go as his guide. His obstinacy was the talk of the country, and all dreaded the result.

He would not take along his sister, or Madame Magloire. He crossed the mountain on a mule, met no one, and arrived safe and sound among his "good friends" the shepherds. He remained there a fortnight, preaching, administering the holy rites, teaching and exhorting. When he was about to leave, he resolved to chant a Te Deum with pontifical ceremonies. He talked with the curé about it. But what could be done? there was no episcopal furniture. They could only place at his disposition a paltry village sacristy with a few old robes of worn-out damask, trimmed with imitation-galloon.

"No matter," said the Bishop. "Monsieur le curé, at the sermon announce our Te Deum. That will take care of itself."

All the neighbouring churches were ransacked, but the assembled magnificence of these humble parishes could not have suitably clothed a single cathedral singer.

While they were in this embarrassment, a large chest was

brought to the parsonage, and left for the Bishop by two unknown horsemen, who immediately rode away. The chest was opened ; it contained a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre ornamented with diamonds, an archbishop's cross, a magnificent crosier, all the pontifical raiment stolen a month before from the treasures of Our Lady of Embrun. In the chest was a paper, on which were written these words : “*Cravatte to Monseigneur Bienvenu.*”

“I said that it would take care of itself,” said the Bishop. Then he added with a smile : “To him who is contented with a curé's surplice, God sends an archbishop's cope.”

“Monseigneur,” murmured the curé, with a shake of the head and a smile, “God—or the devil?”

The Bishop looked steadily upon the curé, and replied with authority,—

“God !”

When he returned to Chastelar, all along the road, the people came with curiosity to see him. At the parsonage in Chastelar he found Mademoiselle Baptistine and Madame Magloire waiting for him, and he said to his sister, “Well, was I not right? the poor priest went among those poor mountaineers with empty hands ; he comes back with hands filled. I went forth placing my trust in God alone ; I bring back the treasures of a cathedral.”

In the evening before going to bed he said further : “Have no fear of robbers or murderers. Such dangers are without, and are but petty. We should fear ourselves. Prejudices are the real robbers ; vices the real murderers. The great dangers are within us. What matters it what threatens our heads or our purses? Let us think only of what threatens our souls.”

Then turning to his sister : “My sister, a priest should never take any precaution against a neighbour. What his neighbour does, God permits. Let us confine ourselves to prayer to God when we think that danger hangs over us.

Let us beseech him, not for ourselves, but that our brother may not fall into crime on our account."

To sum up, events were rare in his life. We relate those we know of; but usually he passed his life in always doing the same things at the same hours. A month of his year was like an hour of his day.

As to what became of the "treasures" of the Cathedral of Embrun, it would embarrass us to be questioned on that point. There were among them very fine things, and very tempting, and very good to steal for the benefit of the unfortunate. Stolen they had already been by others. Half the work was done; it only remained to change the course of the theft, and to make it turn to the side of the poor. We can say nothing more on the subject, except that there was found among the Bishop's papers a rather obscure note, which is possibly connected with this affair, that reads as follows: "*The question is, whether this ought to be returned to the cathedral or to the hospital.*"

## VIII.

### AFTER-DINNER PHILOSOPHY.

THE Senator heretofore referred to was an intelligent man, who had made his way in life with a directness of purpose which paid no attention to all those stumbling-blocks which constitute obstacles in men's path, known as conscience, sworn faith, justice, and duty; he had advanced straight to his object without once swerving in the line of his advancement and his interest. He had been formerly a *procureur*, mollified by success, and was not a bad man at all, doing all the little kindnesses that he could to his sons, sons-in-law, and relatives generally, and even to his friends; having prudently taken the pleasant side of life, and availed

himself of all the benefits which were thrown in his way. Everything else appeared to him very stupid. He was sprightly, and just enough of a scholar to think himself a disciple of Epicurus, while possibly he was only a product of Pigault-Lebrun. He laughed readily and with gusto at infinite and eternal things, and at the “crotchetts of the good Bishop.” He laughed at them sometimes, with a patronizing air, before M. Myriel himself, who listened.

At some semi-official ceremony, Count \* \* \* (this senator) and M. Myriel remained to dinner with the prefect. At dessert, the senator, a little elevated, though always dignified, exclaimed :—

“Parbleu, Monsieur Bishop ; let us talk. It is difficult for a senator and a bishop to look each other in the eye without winking. We are two augurs. I have a confession to make to you ; I have my philosophy.”

“And you are right,” answered the Bishop. “As one makes his philosophy, so he rests. You are on a purple bed, Monsieur Senator.”

The senator, encouraged by this, proceeded :—

“Let us be good fellows.”

“Good devils, even,” said the Bishop.

“I assure you,” resumed the senator, “that the Marquis d’Argens, Pyrrho, Hobbes, and M. Naigeon are not rascals. I have all my philosophers in my library, gilt-edged.”

“Like yourself, Monsieur le Comte,” interrupted the Bishop.

The senator went on :—

“I hate Diderot ; he is an ideologist, a demagogue, and a revolutionist, at heart believing in God, and more bigoted than Voltaire. Voltaire mocked at Needham, and he was wrong ; for Needham’s eels prove that God is useless. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour supplied the *fiat lux*. Suppose the drop greater and the spoonful larger, and you have the world. Man is the eel. Then what is the use of

an Eternal Father? Monsieur Bishop, the Jehovah hypothesis tires me. It is good for nothing except to produce people with scraggy bodies and empty heads. Down with this great All, who torments me! Hail, Zero! who leaves me quiet. Between us, to open my heart, and confess to my pastor, as I ought, I will confess that I have common sense. My head is not turned with your Jesus, who preaches in every cornfield renunciation and self-sacrifice. It is the advice of a miser to beggars. Renunciation, for what? Self-sacrifice, to what? I do not see that one wolf immolates himself for the benefit of another wolf. Let us dwell, then, with nature. We are at the summit, and let us have a higher philosophy. What is the use of being in a higher position if we can't see further than another man's nose? Let us live gaily; for life is all we have. That man has another life, elsewhere, above, below, anywhere—I don't believe a single word of it. Ah! I am recommended to self-sacrifice and renunciation, that I should take care what I do; that I must break my head over questions of good and evil, justice and injustice; over the *fas* and the *nefas*. Why? Because I shall have to render an account for my acts. When? After death. What a fine dream! After I am dead it will take fine fingers to pinch me. I should like to see a shade grasp a handful of ashes. Let us who are initiated, and have raised the skirt of Isis, speak the truth; there is neither good nor evil; there is only vegetation. Let us seek for the real; let us dig into everything. Let us go to the bottom. We should scent out the truth, dig in the earth for it, and seize upon it. Then it gives you exquisite joy; then you grow strong, and laugh. I am firmly convinced, Monsieur Bishop, that the immortality of man is a will-o'-the-wisp. Oh! charming promise. Trust it if you will! Adam's letter of recommendation! We have souls, and are to become angels, with blue wings to our shoulders. Tell me, now, isn't it Tertullian

who says that the blessed will go from one star to another? Well, we shall be the grasshoppers of the skies. And then we shall see God. Tut tut tut. All these heavens are silly. God is a monstrous myth. I shouldn't say that in the *Moniteur*, of course, but I whisper it among my friends. *Inter pocula*. To sacrifice earth to paradise is to leave the substance for the shadow. I am not so stupid as to be the dupe of the Infinite. I am nothing; I call myself Count Nothing, Senator. Did I exist before my birth? No. Shall I, after my death? No. What am I? A little dust aggregated by an organism. What have I to do on this earth? I have the choice to suffer or to enjoy. Where will suffering lead me? To nothing. But I shall have suffered. Where will enjoyment lead me? To nothing. But I shall have enjoyed. My choice is made. I must eat or be eaten, and I choose to eat. It is better to be the tooth than the grass. Such is my philosophy. After which, as I tell you, there is the grave-digger—the pantheon for *us*—but all fall into the great gulf—the end; *finis*; total liquidation. This is the vanishing point. Death is dead, believe me. I laugh at the idea that there is any one there that has anything to say to me. It is an invention of nurses: Bugaboo for children; Jehovah for men. No, our morrow is night. Beyond the tomb are only equal nothings. You have been Sardanapalus, or you have been Vincent de Paul—that amounts to the same nothing. That is the truth of it. Let us live, then, above all things; use your personality while you have it. In fact, I tell you, Monsieur Bishop, I have my philosophy, and I have my philosophers. I do not allow myself to be entangled with nonsense. But it is necessary there should be something for those who are below us, the bare-foots, knife-grinders, and other wretches. Legends and chimeras are given them to swallow, about the soul, immortality, paradise, and the stars. They munch that; they spread it on their dry bread. He who has

nothing besides, has the good God—that is the least good he can have. I make no objection to it, but I keep Monsieur Naigeon for myself. The good God is good for the people."

The Bishop clapped his hands.

"That is the idea," he exclaimed. "This materialism is an excellent thing, and truly marvellous ; reject it who will. Ah ! when one has it, he is a dupe no more ; he does not stupidly allow himself to be exiled like Cato, or stoned like Stephen, or burnt alive like Joan of Arc. Those who have succeeded in procuring this admirable materialism have the happiness of feeling that they are irresponsible, and of thinking they can devour everything in quietness—places, sinecures, honours, power rightly or wrongly acquired, lucrative recantations, useful treasons, savoury capitulations of conscience, and that they will enter their graves with their digestion completed. How agreeable it is ! I do not say that for you, Monsieur Senator. Nevertheless, I cannot but felicitate you. You great lords have, you say, a philosophy of your own, for your special benefit—exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone ; good with all sauces, admirably seasoning the pleasures of life. This philosophy is found at great depths, and brought up by special search. But you are good princes, and you are quite willing that the belief in the good God should be the philosophy of the people, much as goose with onions is the turkey with truffles of the poor."

## IX.

### THE BROTHER PORTRAYED BY THE SISTER.

To afford an idea of the household of the Bishop of D—, and the manner in which these two good women subordinated their actions, thoughts, even their womanly

instincts, so liable to disturbance, to the habits and projects of the Bishop, so that he had not even to speak, in order to express them, we cannot do better than to copy here a letter from Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame la Comtesse de Boischevron, the friend of her childhood. This letter is in our possession :— .

“ *D—, Dec. 16th, 18—.*

“ MY DEAR MADAME,—Not a day passes that we do not speak of you ; that is customary enough with us ; but we have now another reason. Would you believe that in washing and dusting the ceilings and walls, Madame Magloire has made some discoveries ? At present, our two chambers, which were hung with old paper, whitewashed, would not disparage a château in the style of your own. Madame Magloire has torn off all the paper : it had something underneath. My parlour, where there is no furniture, and which we use to dry clothes in, is fifteen feet high, eighteen feet square, and has a ceiling, once painted and gilded, with beams like those of your house. This was covered over with canvas during the time it was used as a hospital ; and then we have wainscoting of the time of our grandmothers. But it is my own room which you ought to see. Madame Magloire has discovered, beneath at least ten thicknesses of paper, some pictures, which, though not good, are quite durable. Telemachus received on horseback, by Minerva, is one ; and then, again, he is in the gardens—I forget their name ; another is where the Roman ladies resorted for a single night. I could say much more ; I have Romans, men and women [*here a word is illegible*] and all their retinue. Madame Magloire has cleaned it all, and this summer she is going to repair some little damages, and varnish it, and my room will be a veritable museum. She also found in a corner of the storehouse two pier tables of antique style ; they asked two crowns of six livres to regild them, but it is far better

to give that to the poor ; besides that they are very ugly, and I much prefer a round mahogany table.

“ I am always happy : my brother is so good : he gives all he has to the poor and sick. We are full of cares : the weather is very severe in the winter, and one must do something for those who lack. We, at least, are warmed and lighted, and you know those are great comforts.

“ My brother has his peculiarities ; when he talks he says that a bishop ought to be thus. Just think of it, that the door is never closed. Come in who will, he is at once my brother’s guest ; he fears nothing, not even in the night ; he says that is his form of bravery.

“ He wishes me not to fear for him, nor that Madame Magloire should ; he exposes himself to every danger, and prefers that we should not even seem to be aware of it ; one must know how to understand him.

“ He goes out in the rain, walks through the water, travels in winter ; he has no fear of darkness, or dangerous roads, or of those he may meet.

“ Last year he went all alone into a district infested with robbers. He would not take us. He was gone a fortnight, and when he came back, though we had thought him dead, nothing had happened to him, and he was quite well. He said ‘ See, how they have robbed me ! ’ And he opened a trunk in which he had the jewels of the Embrun Cathedral which the robbers had given him.

“ Upon that occasion, on the return, I could not keep from scolding him a little, taking care only to speak while the carriage made a noise, so that no one could hear us.

“ At first I used to say to myself, he stops for no danger, he is incorrigible. But now I have become used to it. I make signs to Madame Magloire that she shall not oppose him, and he runs what risks he chooses. I call away Madame Magloire ; I go to my room, I pray for him, and fall asleep. I am calm, for I know very well that if any

harm happened to him, it would be my death : I should go away to the good Father with my brother and my bishop. Madame Magloire has had more difficulty in getting used to what she calls his imprudence. Now the thing is settled : we pray together ; we are afraid together, and we go to sleep. Should Satan even come into the house, no one would interfere. After all, what is there to fear in this house ? There is always One with us who is the strongest : Satan may visit our house, but the good God inhabits it.

“ That is enough for me. My brother has no need now even to speak a word. I understand him without his speaking, and we commend ourselves to Providence.

“ It must be so with a man whose soul is so noble.

“ I asked my brother for the information which you requested respecting the Faux family. You know how well he knows about it, and how much he remembers, for he was always a very good royalist, and this is really a very old Norman family, of the district of Caen. There are five centuries of a Raoul de Faux, Jean de Faux, and Thomas de Faux, who were of the gentry, one of whom was a lord of Rochefort. The last was Guy Etienne Alexandre, who was a cavalry colonel, and held some rank in the light horse of Brittany. His daughter, Marie Louise, married Adrien Charles de Gramont, son of Duke Louis de Gramont, a peer of France, colonel of the Gardes Françaises, and Lieutenant General of the army. It is written Faux, Fauq, and Faouq.

“ Will you not, my dear madame, ask for us the prayers of your holy relative, Monsieur le Cardinal ? As to your precious Sylvanie, she has done well not to waste the short time that she is with you in writing to me. She is well, you say ; studies according to your wishes, and loves me still. That is all I could desire. Her remembrance, through you, reached me, and I was glad to receive it. My health is tolerably good ; still I grow thinner every day.

Farewell : my paper is filled and I must stop. With a thousand good wishes,

“BAPTISTINE.

“P.S.—Your little nephew is charming ; do you remember that he will soon be five years old ? He saw a horse pass yesterday, on which they had put knee-caps, and he cried out ; ‘What is that he has got on his knees?’ The child is so pretty. His little brother drags an old broom about the room for a carriage, and says, hi !”

As this letter shows, these two women knew how to conform to the Bishop’s mode of life, with that woman’s tact which understands a man better than he can comprehend himself. Beneath the gentle and frank manner of the Bishop of D——, which never changed, he sometimes performed great, daring, and even grand acts, without seeming to be aware of it himself. They trembled, but did not interfere. Sometimes Madame Magloire would venture a reproof beforehand : never at the time, or afterwards ; no one ever disturbed him by word or token in an action once begun. At certain times, when he had no need to say it, when, perhaps, he was hardly conscious of it, so complete was his artlessness, they vaguely felt that he was acting as Bishop, and at such periods they were only two shadows in the house. They waited on him passively, and if to obey was to disappear, they disappeared. With charming and instinctive delicacy they knew that obtrusive attentions would annoy him ; so even when they thought him in danger, they understood, I will not say his thought, but his nature rather, to the degree of ceasing to watch over him. They entrusted him to God’s keeping.

Besides, Baptistine said, as we have seen, that his death would be hers. Madame Magloire did not say so, but she knew it.

## X.

## THE BISHOP IN THE PRESENCE OF AN UNKNOWN LIGHT.

A LITTLE while before the date of the letter quoted in the preceding pages, the Bishop performed an act, which the whole town thought far more perilous than his excursion across the mountains infested by the bandits.

In the country near D——, there was a man who lived alone. This man, to state the startling fact without preface, had been a member of the National Convention. His name was G——.

The little circle of D—— spoke of the Conventionist with a certain sort of horror. A Conventionist, think of it; that was in the time when folks thee-and-thoued one another, and said "citizen." This man came very near being a monster: he had not exactly voted for the execution of the king, but almost; he was half a regicide, and had been a terrible creature altogether. How was it, then, on the return of the legitimate princes, that they had not arraigned this man before the Provost Court? He would not have been beheaded, perhaps, but even if clemency were necessary he might have been banished for life; in fact, an example, etc., etc. Besides, he was an atheist, as all those people are. Babblings of geese against a vulture!

But was this G—— a vulture? Yes, if one should judge him by the savageness of his solitude. As he had not voted for the King's execution, he was not included in the sentence of exile, and could remain in France.

He lived about an hour's walk from the town, far from any hamlet or road, in a secluded ravine of a very wild valley. It was said he had a sort of resting-place there, a

hole, a den. He had no neighbours or even passers-by. Since he had lived there the path which led to the place had become overgrown, and people spoke of it as of the house of a hangman.

From time to time, however, the Bishop reflectingly gazed upon the horizon at the spot where a clump of trees indicated the ravine of the aged Conventionist, and he would say,—“There lives a soul which is alone.” And in the depths of his thought he would add, “I owe him a visit.”

But this idea, we must confess, though it appeared natural at first, yet, after a few moments’ reflection, seemed strange, impracticable, and almost repulsive. For at heart he shared the general impression, and the Conventionist inspired him, he knew not how, with that sentiment which is the fringe of hatred, and which the word “aversion” so well expresses.

However, the shepherd should not recoil from the diseased sheep. Ah! but what a sheep!

The good bishop was perplexed; sometimes he walked in that direction, but he returned.

At last one day the news was circulated in the town that the young herdsboy who served the Conventionist G—— in his retreat, had come for a doctor; that the old wretch was dying, that he was motionless, and could not live through the night. “Thank God!” added many.

The Bishop took his cane, put on his overcoat, because his cassock was badly worn, as we have said, and besides the night wind was evidently rising, and set out.

The sun was setting; it had nearly touched the horizon when the Bishop reached the accursed spot. He felt a certain quickening of the pulse as he drew near the den. He jumped over a ditch, cleared a hedge, made his way through a brush fence, found himself in a dilapidated garden, and after a bold advance across the open ground,

suddenly, behind some high brushwood, he discovered the retreat.

It was a low, poverty-stricken hut, small and clean, with a little vine nailed up in front.

Before the door in an old chair, on rollers, there sat a man with white hair, looking with smiling gaze upon the setting sun.

The young herdsboy stood near him, handing him a bowl of milk.

While the Bishop was looking, the old man raised his voice.

“Thank you,” he said, “I shall need nothing more;” and his smile changed from the sun to rest upon the boy.

The Bishop stepped forward. At the sound of his footsteps the old man turned his head, and his face expressed as much surprise as one can feel after a long life.

“This is the first time since I have lived here,” said he, “that I have had a visitor. Who are you, Monsieur?”

“My name is Bienvenu-Myriel,” the Bishop replied.

“Bienvenu-Myriel? I have heard that name before. Are you he whom the people call Monseigneur Bienvenu?”  
“I am.”

The old man continued, half smiling, “Then you are my bishop?”

“Possibly.”

“Come in, Monsieur.”

The Conventionist extended his hand to the Bishop, but he did not take it. He only said,—

“I am glad to find that I have been misinformed. You do not appear to me very ill.”

“Monsieur,” replied the old man, “I shall soon be better.”

He paused and said,—

“I shall be dead in three hours.”

Then he continued,—

“I am something of a physician; I know the steps by

which death approaches. Yesterday my feet only were cold ; to-day it has crept to my knees ; now it has reached the waist ; when it touches the heart, all will be over. The sunset is lovely, is it not ? I had myself wheeled out to get a final look at nature. You can speak to me, that will not tire me. You do well to come to see a man who is dying. It is good that these moments should have witnesses. Every one has his fancy ; I should like to live until the dawn, but I know I have scarcely life for three hours. It will be night, but what matters it, to finish is a very simple thing. One does not need morning for that. Be it so ; I shall die in the starlight.”—

The old man turned towards the herdsboy,—

“Little one, go to bed. Thou didst watch the other night ; thou art weary.”

The child went into the hut.

The old man followed with his eyes, and added, as if speaking to himself, “While he is sleeping, I shall die ; the two slumbers keep fit company.”

The Bishop was not as much affected as he might have been—it was not his idea of godly death. We must tell all, for the little inconsistencies of great souls should be mentioned. He who had laughed so heartily at “His Highness,” was still slightly shocked at not being called Monseigneur, and was almost tempted to answer “citizen.” He felt a desire to use the brusque familiarity common enough with doctors and priests, but which was not customary with him.

This Conventionist after all—this representative of the people—had been a power on the earth ; and perhaps for the first time in his life the Bishop felt himself in a humour to be severe. The Conventionist, however, treated him with a modest consideration and cordiality, in which perhaps might have been discerned that humility which is befitting one so nearly dust unto dust.

The Bishop, on his part, although he generally kept himself free from curiosity, which to his idea was almost offensive, could not avoid examining the Conventionist with an attention for which, as it had not its source in sympathy, his conscience would have condemned him as to any other man ; but a Conventionist he looked upon as an outlaw, even to the law of charity.

G——, with his self-possessed manner, erect figure, and vibrating voice, was one of those noble octogenarians who are the marvel of the physiologist. The revolution produced many of these men equal to the epoch. One felt that here was a tested man. Though so near death, he preserved all the appearance of health. His bright glances, his firm accent, and the muscular movements of his shoulders, seemed almost sufficient to disconcert death, Azrael, the Mahometan angel of the sepulchre, would have turned back, thinking he had mistaken the door. G—— appeared to be dying because he wished to die. There was freedom in his agony—his legs only were paralyzed. His feet were cold and dead, but his head lived in full power of life and light. At this solemn moment G—— seemed like the king in the oriental tale—flesh above and marble below. The Bishop seated himself upon a stone near by. The beginning of their conversation was *ex abrupto*,—

“I congratulate you,” he said, in a tone of reprimand. “At least you did not vote for the execution of the king.”

The Conventionist did not seem to notice the bitter emphasis placed upon the words “at least.” The smiles vanished from his face, and he replied,—

“Do not congratulate me too much, Monsieur ; I did vote for the destruction of the tyrant.”

And the tone of austerity confronted the tone of severity.

“What do you mean ?” asked the Bishop.

“I mean that man has a tyrant, Ignorance. I voted for the abolition of that tyrant. That tyrant has begotten

royalty, which is authority springing from the False, while Science is authority springing from the True. Man should be governed by Science."

"And conscience," added the Bishop.

"The same thing; conscience is innate knowledge that we have."

Monsieur Bienvenu listened with some amazement to this language, novel as it was to him.

The Conventionist went on,—

"As to Louis XVI.: I said No. I do not believe that I have the right to kill a man, but I feel it a duty to exterminate evil. I voted for the downfall of the tyrant—that is to say, for the abolition of prostitution for woman, of slavery for man, of night for the child. In voting for the republic I voted for that; I voted for fraternity, for harmony, for light. I assisted in casting down prejudices and errors; their downfall brings light! We caused the old world to fall; the old world, a vase of misery, reversed, becomes an urn of joy to the human race."

"Joy alloyed," said the Bishop.

"You might say joy troubled, and, at present, after this fatal return of the past which we call 1814, joy disappeared. Alas! the work was imperfect I admit; we demolished the ancient order of things physically, but not entirely in the idea. To destroy abuses is not enough; habits must be changed. The windmill has gone, but the wind is there yet."

"You have demolished. To demolish may be useful, but I distrust a demolition effected in anger!"

"Justice has its anger, Monsieur Bishop, and the wrath of justice is an element of progress. Whatever may be said matters not, the French Revolution is the greatest step in advance taken by mankind since the advent of Christ; incomplete it may be, but it is sublime. It loosened all the secret bonds of society, it softened all hearts, it calmed, ap-

peased, enlightened ; it made the waves of civilization to flow over the earth ; it was good. The French Revolution is the consecration of humanity.”

The Bishop could not help murmuring : “Yes, ‘93 !”

The Conventionist raised himself in his chair with a solemnity well nigh mournful, and as well as a dying person could exclaim, he exclaimed,—

“Ah ! you are there ! ’93 ! I was expecting that. A cloud had been forming for fifteen hundred years ; at the end of fifteen centuries it burst. You condemn the thunderbolt.”

Without perhaps acknowledging it to himself, the Bishop felt that he had been touched : however he made the best of it, and replied,—

“The judge speaks in the name of justice, the priest in the name of pity, which is only a more exalted justice. A thunderbolt should not be mistaken.”

And he added, looking fixedly at the Conventionist ; “Louis XVII. ?”

The Conventionist stretched out his hand and seized the Bishop’s arm.

“Louis XVII. Let us see ! For whom do you weep ? —for the innocent child ? It is well I weep with you. For the Royal child ? I ask time to reflect. To my view the brother of Cartouche, an innocent child, hung by a rope under his arms in the Place de Grève till he died, for the sole crime of being the brother of Cartouche, is no less sad sight than the grandson of Louis XV., an innocent child, murdered in the tower of the Temple for the sole crime of being the grandson of Louis XV.”

“Monsieur,” said the Bishop, “I dislike this coupling of names.”

“Cartouche or Louis XV ; for which are you concerned ?”

There was a moment of silence ; the Bishop regretted

almost that he had come, and yet he felt strangely and inexplicably moved.

The Conventionist resumed : “ Oh Monsieur Priest ! you do not love the harshness of the truth, but Christ loved it. He took a scourge and purged the temple ; his flashing whip was a rude speaker of truths ; when he said ‘ *Sinite parvulos*,’ he made no distinctions among the little ones. He was not pained at coupling the dauphin of Barabbas with the dauphin of Herod. Monsieur, innocence is its own crown ! Innocence has only to act to be noble ! She is as august in rags as in the fleur de lys.”

“ That is true,” said the Bishop, in a low tone.

“ I repeat,” continued the old man ; “ you have mentioned Louis XVII. Let us weep together for all the innocent, for all the martyrs, for all the children, for the low as well as for the high. I am one of them, but then, as I have told you, we must go further back than ’93, and our tears must begin before Louis XVII. I will weep for the children of kings with you, if you will weep with me for the little ones of the people.”

“ I weep for all,” said the Bishop.

“ Equally,” exclaimed G—, “ and if the balance inclines, let it be on the side of the people ; they have suffered longer.”

There was silence again, broken at last by the old man. He raised himself upon one elbow, took a pinch of his cheek between his thumb and his bent forefinger, as one does mechanically in questioning and forming an opinion, and addressed the Bishop with a look full of all the energies of agony. It was almost an anathema.

“ Yes, Monsieur, it is for a long time that the people have been suffering, and then, sir, that is not all ; why do you come to question me and to speak to me of Louis XVII.? I do not know you. Since I have been in this region I have lived within these walls alone, never passing beyond

them, seeing none but this child who helps me. Your name has, it is true, reached me confusedly, and I must say not very indistinctly, but that matters not. Adroit men have so many ways of imposing upon this good simple people. For instance I did not hear the sound of your carriage. You left it doubtless behind the thicket, down there at the branching of the road. You have told me that you were the Bishop, but that tells me nothing about your moral personality. Now, then, I repeat my question—Who are you? You are a bishop, a prince of the church, one of those men who are covered with gold, with insignia, and with wealth, who have fat livings—the see of D——, fifteen thousand francs regular, ten thousand francs contingent, total twenty-five thousand francs—who have kitchens, who have retinues, who give good dinners, who eat moor-hens on Friday, who strut about in your gaudy coach, like peacocks, with lackeys before and lackeys behind, and who have palaces, and who roll in your carriages in the name of Jesus Christ who went bare-footed. You are a prelate ; rents, palaces, horses, valets, a good table, all the sensualities of life, you have these, like all the rest, and you enjoy them like all the rest ; very well, but that says too much or not enough ; that does not enlighten me as to your intrinsic worth, that which is peculiar to yourself, you who come probably with the claim of bringing me wisdom. To whom am I speaking? Who are you?"

The Bishop bowed his head and replied, "*Vermis sum.*"

"A worm of the earth in a carriage!" grumbled the old man.

It was the turn of the Conventionist to be haughty, and of the Bishop to be humble.

The Bishop replied with mildness,—

"Monsieur be it so. But explain to me how my carriage, which is there a few steps behind the trees, how my good table and the moor-fowl that I eat on Friday, how my twenty-

five thousand livres of income, how my palace and my lackeys prove that pity is not a virtue, that kindness is not a duty, and that '93 was not inexorable?"

The old man passed his hand across his forehead as if to dispel a cloud.

"Before answering you," said he, "I beg your pardon. I have done wrong Monsieur; you are in my house, you are my guest. I owe you courtesy. You are discussing my ideas; it is fitting that I confine myself to combatting your reasoning. Your riches and your enjoyments are advantages that I have over you in the debate, but it is not in good taste to avail myself of them. I promise you to use them no more."

"I thank you," said the Bishop.

G—— went on,—

"Let us get back to the explanation that you asked me. Where were we? What were you saying to me? that '93 was inexorable?"

"Inexorable, yes," said the bishop. "What do you think of Marat clapping his hands at the guillotine?"

"What do you think of Bossuet chanting the Te Deum over the dragonnades?"

The answer was severe, but it reached its aim with the keenness of a dagger. The Bishop was staggered, no reply presented itself; but it shocked him to hear Bossuet spoken of in that manner. The best men have their fetishes, and sometimes they feel almost crushed at the little respect that logic shows them.

The Conventionist began to gasp; the agonizing asthma, which mingles with the latest breath, made his voice broken; nevertheless, his soul yet appeared perfectly lucid in his eyes. He continued,—

"Let us have a few more words here and there—I would like it. Our ide of the Revolution which, taken as a whole, is an immense human affirmation, '93, alas! is a reply.

You think it inexorable, but the whole monarchy, Monsieur Carrier is a bandit ; but what name do you give to Mon-trevel ? Fouquier-Tainville is a wretch ; but what is your opinion of Lamoignon Bâville ? Maillard is frightful, but Saulx Tavannes, if you please ? Le Père Duchêne is ferocious, but what epithet will you furnish me for Le Père Letellier ? Jourdan-Coupe-Tête is a monster, but less than the Marquis of Louvois. Monsieur, Monsieur, I lament Marie Antoinette, archduchess and queen, but I lament also that poor Huguenot woman who, in 1685, under Louis le Grand, Monsieur, while nursing her child was stripped to the waist and tied to a post, while her child was held before her ; her breast swelled with milk, and her heart with anguish ; the little one, weak and famished, seeing the breast, cried with agony ; and the executioner said to the woman, to the nursing mother, “ Recant ! ” giving her the choice between the death of her child and the death of her conscience. What say you to this Tantalus torture adapted to a mother ? Monsieur, forget not this ; the French Revolution had its reasons. Its wrath will be pardoned by the future ; its result is a better world. From its most terrible blows comes a caress for the human race. I must be brief. I must stop. I have too good a cause ; and I am dying.”

And, ceasing to look at the Bishop, the old man completed his idea in these few tranquil words,—

“ Yes, the brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over, this is recognised : that the human race has been harshly treated, but that it has been advanced.”

The Conventionist thought that he had borne down successively one after the other all the interior intrenchments of the Bishop. There was one left, however, and from this, the last resource of Monseigneur Bienvenu’s resistance, came forth these words, in which nearly all the rudeness of the exordium reappeared.

“ Progress ought to believe in God. The good cannot have an impious servitor. An atheist is an evil leader of the human race.”

The old representative of the people did not answer. He was trembling. He looked up into the sky, and a tear gathered slowly in his eye. When the lid was full, the tear rolled down his livid cheek, and he said, almost stammering, low, and talking to himself, his eye lost in the depths,—

“ O thou ! O ideal ! thou alone dost exist ! ”

The Bishop felt a kind of inexpressible emotion.

After brief silence, the old man raised his finger towards heaven, and said,—

“ The infinite exists. It is there. If the infinite had no *me*, the *me* would be its limit ; it would not be the infinite ; in other words, it would not be. But it is. Then it has a *me*. This *me* of the infinite is God.”

The dying man pronounced these last words in a loud voice, and with a shudder of ecstacy, as if he saw some one. When he ceased, his eyes closed. The effort had exhausted him. It was evident that he had lived through in one minute the few hours that remained to him. What he had said had brought him near to him who is in death. The last moment was at hand.

The Bishop perceived it, time was pressing. He had come as a priest ; from extreme coldness he had passed by degrees to extreme emotion ; he looked upon those closed eyes, he took that old, wrinkled, and icy hand, and drew closer to the dying man.

“ This hour is the hour of God. Do you not think it would be a source of regret, if we should have met in vain ? ”

The Conventionist re-opened his eyes. Calmness was imprinted upon his face, where there had been a cloud.

“ Monsieur Bishop,” said he, with a deliberation which perhaps, came still more from the dignity of his soul than from the ebb of his strength, “ I have passed my life in

meditation, study, and contemplation. I was sixty years old when my country called me, and ordered me to take part in her affairs. I obeyed. There were abuses, I fought them ; there were tyrannies, I destroyed them ; there were rights and principles, I proclaimed and confessed them. The soil was invaded, I defended it; France was threatened, I offered her my breast. I was not rich ; I am poor. I was one of the masters of the State, the vaults of the Bank were piled with specie, so that we had to strengthen the walls or they would have fallen under the weight of gold and of silver ; I dined in the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec at twenty-two sous for the meal. I succoured the oppressed, I solaced the suffering. True, I tore the drapery from the altar ; but it was to staunch the wounds of the country. I have always supported the forward march of the human race towards the light, and I have sometimes resisted a progress which was without pity. I have, on occasion, protected my own adversaries, your friends. There is at Peteghem in Flanders, at the very place where the Merovingian kings had their summer palace, a monastery of Urbanists, the Abbey of Sainte Claire in Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793 ; I have done my duty according to my strength, and the good that I could. After which I was hunted, hounded, pursued, persecuted, slandered, railed at, spit upon, cursed, proscribed. For many years now, with my white hairs, I have perceived that many people believed they had a right to despise me ; to the poor, ignorant crowd I have the face of the damned, and I accept, hating no man myself, the isolation of hatred. Now I am eighty-six years old ; I am about to die. What have you come to ask of me ?”

“ Your benediction,” said the Bishop. And he fell upon his knees.

When the Bishop raised his head, the face of the old man had become august. He had expired.

The Bishop went home deeply absorbed in thought. He

spent the whole night in prayer. The next day, some persons, emboldened by curiosity, tried to talk with him of the Conventionist G——; he merely pointed to Heaven.

From that moment he redoubled his tenderness and brotherly love for the weak and the suffering.

Every allusion to “that old scoundrel G——,” threw him into a strange reverie. No one could say that the passage of that soul before his own, and the reflex of that grand conscience upon his own, had not had its effect upon his approach to perfection.

This “pastoral visit” was of course an occasion for criticism by the little local coteries of the place.

Was the bed-side of such a man as that the place for a Bishop? Of course he could expect no conversion there. All these revolutionists are back-sliders. Then why go there? What had he been there to see? He must have been very curious to see a soul carried away by the devil.

One day a dowager, of that impertinent variety who think themselves witty, addressed this sally to him: “Monseigneur, people ask when your Grandeur will have the red bonnet?” “Oh! ho! that is a high colour,” replied the Bishop. “Luckily those who despise it in a bonnet, venerate it in a hat.”

## XI.

### A QUALIFICATION.

WE should be very much deceived if we supposed from this that Monseigneur Bienvenu was “a philosopher bishop,” or “a patriot curé.” His meeting, which we might almost call his communion with the Conventionist G——, left him in a state of astonishment which rendered him still more charitable; that was all.

Although Monseigneur Bienvenu was anything but a

politician, we ought here perhaps to point out very briefly his position in relation to the events of the day, if we may suppose that Monseigneur Bienvenu ever thought of having a position.

For this we must go back a few years.

Some time after the elevation of M. Myriel to the episcopacy, the Emperor made him a baron of the empire, at the same time with several other bishops. The arrest of the Pope took place, as we know, on the night of the fifth of July, 1809; on that occasion, M. Myriel was called by Napoleon to the synod of the bishops of France and Italy, convoked at Paris. This synod was held at Notre Dame, and commenced its sessions on the 15th of June, 1811, under the presidency of Cardinal Fesch. M. Myriel was one of the ninety-five bishops who were present. But he attended only one sitting, and three or four private conferences. Bishop of a mountain diocese, living so near to nature, in rusticity and privation, he seemed to bring among these eminent personages ideas, that changed the temperature of the synod. He returned very soon to D——. When asked about this sudden return, he answered : “*I annoyed them. The free air went in with me. I had the effect of an open door.*”

Another time, he said : “*What would you have? Those prelates are princes. I am only a poor peasant bishop.*”

The fact is, that he was disliked. Among other strange things, he had dropped the remark one evening when he happened to be at the house of one of his colleagues of the highest rank : “What fine clocks! fine carpets! fine liveries! This must be very uncomfortable. Oh! how unwilling I should be to have all these superfluities crying for ever in my ears: ‘there are people who hunger! there are people who are cold! there are poor! there are poor!’”

We must say, by the way, that the hatred of luxury is

not an intelligent hatred. It implies a hatred of the arts. Nevertheless, among churchmen, beyond their rites and ceremonies, luxury is a crime. It seems to disclose habits which are not truly charitable. A wealthy priest is a contradiction. He ought to keep himself near the poor. But, who can be in contact continually, by night as well as day, with all distresses, all misfortunes, all privations, without taking upon himself a little of that holy poverty, like the dust of a journey? Can you imagine a man near a fire, who does not feel warm? Can you imagine a labourer working constantly at a furnace, who has not a hair burned, nor a nail blackened, nor a drop of sweat, nor a speck of ashes on his face? The first proof of charity in a priest, and especially a bishop, is poverty.

That is doubtless the view which the Bishop of D—— took of it.

It must not be thought, however, that he took part in the delicate matters which would be called “the ideas of the age.” He had little to do with the theological quarrels of the moment, and kept his peace on questions where the Church and the State were compromised; but if he had been pressed, he would have been found rather Ultramontane than Gallican. As we are drawing a portrait, and can make no concealment, we are compelled to add that he was very cool towards Napoleon in the decline of his power. After 1813, he acquiesced in, or applauded all the hostile manifestations. He refused to see him as he passed on his return from the island of Elba, and declined to order in his diocese public prayers for the Emperor during the Hundred Days.

Besides his sister, Mademoiselle Baptiste, he had two brothers; one, a general, the other, a prefect. He wrote occasionally to both. He felt a coolness towards the first, because, being in a command in Provence, at the time of the landing at Cannes, the general placed himself at the

head of twelve hundred men, and pursued the Emperor as if he wished to let him escape. His correspondence was more affectionate with the other brother, the ex-prefect, a brave and worthy man, who lived in retirement at Paris, in the Rue Cassette.

Even Monseigneur Bienvenu then had his hour of party spirit, his hour of bitterness, his clouds. The shadow of the passions of the moment passed over this great and gentle spirit in its occupation with eternal things. Certainly, such a man deserved to escape political opinions. Let no one misunderstand our idea; we do not confound what are called "political opinions" with that grand aspiration after progress, with that sublime patriotic, democratic, and human faith, which, in our days, should be the very foundation of all generous intelligence. Without entering into questions which have only an indirect bearing upon the subject of this book, we simply say: it would have been well if Monseigneur Bienvenu had not been a royalist, and if his eyes had never been turned for a single instant from that serene contemplation where, steadily shining, above the fictions and the hatreds of this world, above the stormy ebb and flow of human affairs, are seen those three pure luminaries, Truth, Justice, and Charity.

Although we hold that it was not for a political function that God created Monseigneur Bienvenu, we could have understood and admired a protest in the name of right and liberty, a fierce opposition, a perilous and just resistance to Napoleon when he was all-powerful. But what is pleasing to us towards those who are rising, is less pleasing towards those who are falling. We do not admire the combat when there is no danger; and in any case, the combatants of the first hour have alone the right to be the exterminators in the last. He who has not been a determined accuser during prosperity, ought to hold his peace in the presence of adversity. He only who denounces the success at one

time had a right to proclaim the justice of the downfall. As for ourselves, when Providence intervened and struck the blow, we took no part; 1812 began to disarm us. In 1813, the cowardly breach of silence on the part of that taciturn Corps Legislatif, emboldened by catastrophe, was worthy only of indignation, and it was base to applaud it; in 1814, from those traitorous marshals, from that Senate passing from one baseness to another, insulting where they had deified, from that idolatry recoiling and spitting upon its idol, it was a duty to turn away in disgust; in 1815, when the air was filled with the final disasters, when France felt the thrill of their sinister approach, when Waterloo could already be dimly perceived opening before Napoleon, the sorrowful acclamations of the army and of the people to the condemned of Destiny, were no subjects for laughter; and making every reservation as to the despot, a heart like that of the Bishop of D—— ought not perhaps to have refused to see what was august and touching, on the brink of the abyss, in the last embrace of a great nation and a great man.

To conclude: he was always and in everything just, true, equitable, intelligent, humble, and worthy: beneficent, and benevolent, which is another beneficence. He was a priest, a sage, and a man. We must say even that in those political opinions which we have been criticising, and which we are disposed to judge almost severely, he was tolerant and yielding, perhaps more than we, who now speak. The doorkeeper of the City Hall had been placed there by the Emperor. He was an old subaltern officer of the Old Guard, a legionary of Austerlitz, and as staunch a Bonapartist as the eagle. This poor fellow sometimes thoughtlessly allowed words to escape him which the law at that time defined as *seditious matters*. Since the profile of the Emperor had disappeared from the Legion of Honor, he had never worn his badge, as he said, that he might not be

compelled to bear his cross. In his devotion he had himself removed the imperial effigy from the cross that Napoleon had given him; it left a hole, and he would put nothing in its place. “*Better die,*” said he, “*than wear the three toads over my heart.*” He was always railing loudly at Louis XVIII. “*Old gouty-foot with his English spatter-dashes!*” he would say, “*let him go to Prussia with his goat’s-beard,*” happy to unite in the same imprecation the two things that he most detested, Prussia and England. He said so much that he lost his place. There he was without bread, and in the street with his wife and children. The bishop sent for him, scolded him a little, and made him doorkeeper in the Cathedral.

In nine years, by dint of holy works and gentle manners, Monseigneur Bienvenu had filled the City of D—— with a kind of tender and filial veneration. Even his conduct towards Napoleon had been accepted and pardoned in silence by the people, a good, weak flock, who adored their Emperor, but who loved their bishop.

## XII.

### SOLITUDE OF MONSEIGNEUR BIENVENU.

THERE is almost always a swarm of young abbés about a bishop as there is a flock of young officers about a general. They are what the charming St. Francis de Sales somewhere calls “white-billed priests.” Every profession has its aspirants who make up the cortége of those who are at the summit. No power is without its worshippers, no fortune without its court. The seekers of the future revolve about the splendid present. Every capital, like every general, has its staff. Every bishop of influence has his patrol of under-graduates, cherubs who go the rounds

and keep order in the episcopal palace, and who mount guard over Monseigneur's smile. To please a bishop is a foot in the stirrup for a sub-deacon. One must make his own way ; the apostolate never disdains the canonicate.

And as there are elsewhere, rich coronets, so there are in the church rich mitres. There are bishops who stand well at court, rich, well endowed, adroit, accepted of the world, knowing how to pray, doubtless, but knowing also how to ask favours, making themselves, without scruple, the viaduct of advancement for a whole diocese ; bonds of union between the sacristy and diplomacy ; rather abbés than priests, prelates rather than bishops. Lucky are they who can get near them. Men of influence as they are, they rain about them, upon their families and favourites, and upon all of these young men who please them, fat parishes, livings, archdeaconates, almonries, and cathedral functions—steps towards episcopal dignities. In advancing themselves they advance their satellites ; it is a whole solar system in motion, The rays of their glory empurple their suite. Their prosperity scatters its crumbs to those who are behind the scenes, in the shape of nice little promotions. The larger the diocese of the patron, the larger the curacy for the favourite. And then there is Rome. A bishop who can become an archbishop, an archbishop who can become a cardinal, leads you to the conclave ; you enter into the rota ; you have the pallium, you are auditor, you are chamberlain, you are monseigneur, and from Grandeur to Eminence there is only a step, and between Eminence and Holiness there is nothing but the whiff of a ballot. Every cowl may dream of the tiara. The priest is, in our days, the only man who can regularly become a king ; and what a king ; the supreme king. So, what a nursery of aspirations is a seminary. How many blushing chorus-boys, how many young abbés, have the ambitious dairy-maid's pail of milk on their heads ? Who knows how easily ambition disguises

itself under the name of a calling, possibly in good faith, and deceiving itself, saint that it is !

Monseigneur Bienvenu, an humble, poor, private person, was not counted among the rich mitres. This was plain from the entire absence of young priests about him. We have seen that at Paris “he did not take.” No glorious future dreamed of alighting upon this solitary old man. No young ambition was foolish enough to ripen in his shadow. His canons and his grand-vicars were good old men, rather common like himself, and like him, immured in that diocese, from which there was no road to promotion, and they resembled their bishop, with this difference, that they were finished, and he was perfected. The impossibility of getting on under Monseigneur Bienvenu was so plain, that as soon as they were out of the seminary, the young men ordained by him procured recommendations to the Archbishop of Aix or Auch, and went immediately to present them. For, we repeat, men like advancement. A saint who is addicted to abnegation is a dangerous neighbour ; he is very likely to communicate to you, by contagion, an incurable poverty, an ankylosis of the articulations necessary to advancement, and, in fact, more renunciation than you would like ; and men flee from this contagious virtue. Hence the isolation of Monseigneur Bienvenu. We live in a sad society. Succeed ; that is the advice which falls drop by drop, from the overhanging corruption.

We may say, by the way, that success is a hideous thing. Its counterfeit of merit deceives men. To the mass, success has almost the same appearance as supremacy. Success, that pretender to talent, has a dupe—history. Juvenal and Tacitus only reject it. In our days, a philosophy which is almost an official, has entered into its service, wears its livery, and waits in its antechamber. Success ; that is the theory. Prosperity supposes capacity. Win in the lottery, and you are an able man. The victor is *vene-*

rated. To be born with a caul is everything. Have but luck, and you will have the rest ; be fortunate, and you will be thought great. Beyond the five or six great exceptions, which are the wonder of their age, contemporary admiration is nothing but shortsightedness. Gilt is gold. To be a chance comer is no drawback, provided you have improved your chances. The common herd is an old Narcissus, who adores himself, and who applauds the common. That mighty genius, by which one becomes a Moses, an Æschylus, a Dante, a Michael Angelo, or a Napoleon, the multitude assigns at once and by acclamation to whoever succeeds in his object, whatever it may be. Let a notary rise to be a deputy ; let a sham Corneille write *Tiridate* ; let a eunuch come into the possession of a harem ; let a military Prudhomme accidentally win the decisive battle of an epoch ; let an apothecary invent pasteboard soles for army shoes, and lay up, by selling this pasteboard instead of leather for the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, four hundred thousand livres in the funds ; let a pack-pedlar espouse Usury and bring her to bed of seven or eight millions, of which he is the father and she the mother ; let a preacher become a bishop by talking through his nose ; let the steward of a good house become so rich on leaving service that he is made Minister of Finance ;—men call that Genius, just as they call the face of Mousqueton, Beauty, and the bearing of Claude, Majesty. They confound the radiance of the stars of heaven with the radiations which a duck's foot leaves in the mud.

### XIII.

#### WHAT HE BELIEVED.

WE need not examine the Bishop of D—— from an orthodox point of view. Before such a soul we feel only in the humour of respect. The conscience of an upright man

should be taken for granted. Moreover, given certain natures, and we admit the possible development of all the beauties of human virtue in a faith different from our own.

What he thought of this dogma or that mystery, are secrets of the interior faith known only in the tomb where souls enter stripped of all externals. But we are sure that religious difficulties never resulted with him in hypocrisy. No corruption is possible with the diamond. He believed as much as he could. *Credo in patrem*, he often exclaimed ; and, besides, he derived from his good deeds that measure of satisfaction which meets the demands of conscience, and which say in a low voice, “ thou art with God.”

We think it our duty to notice that, outside of and, so to say, beyond this faith, the Bishop had an excess of love. It is on that account, *quia multum amavit*, that he was deemed vulnerable by “ serious men,” “ sober persons,” and “ reasonable people ;” favourite phrases in our sad world, where egotism receives its key-note from pedantry. What was this excess of love ? It was a serene benevolence, overflowing men, as we have already indicated, and on occasion, extending to inanimate things. He lived without disdain. He was indulgent to God’s creation. Every man, even the best, has some inconsiderate severity which he holds in reserve for animals. The Bishop of D—— had none of this severity peculiar to most priests. He did not go as far as the Brahmin, but he appeared to have pondered over those words of Ecclesiastes : “ Who knows whither goeth the spirit of the beast ? ” Ugliness of aspect, monstrosities of instinct, did not trouble or irritate him. He was moved and afflicted by it. He seemed to be thoughtfully seeking, beyond the apparent life, for its cause, its explanation, or its excuse. He seemed at times to ask changes of God. He examined without passion, and with the eye of a linguist deciphering a palimpsest, the portion of chaos which there is yet in nature. These reveries sometimes

drew from him strange words. One morning, he was in his garden, and thought himself alone ; but his sister was walking behind him ; all at once he stopped, and looked at something on the ground ; it was a large, black, hairy horrible spider. His sister heard him say :

“Poor thing ! it is not his fault.”

Why not relate this almost divine childlikeness of goodness ? Puerilities, perhaps, but these sublime puerilities were those of St. Francis of Assisi and of Marcus Aurelius. One day he received a sprain rather than crush an ant.

So lived this upright man. Sometimes he went to sleep in his garden, and then there was nothing more venerable.

Monseigneur Bienvenu had been formerly, according to the accounts of his youth, and even of his early manhood, a passionate, perhaps a violent man. His universal tenderness was less an instinct of nature than the result of a strong conviction filtered through life into his heart, slowly dropping in upon him, thought by thought ; for a character, as well as a rock, may be worn into by drops of water.

Such marks are ineffaceable—such formations are indestructible.

In 1815, we think we have already said, he attained his seventy-sixth year, but he did not appear to be more than sixty. He was not tall, he was somewhat fleshly, and frequently took long walks that he might not become more so ; he had a firm step, and was but little bowed, a circumstance from which we do not claim to draw any conclusion.—Gregory XVI., at eighty years, was erect and smiling, which did not prevent him from being a bad bishop. Monseigneur Bienvenu had what people call “a fine head,” but so benevolent that you forgot it was fine.

When he talked with that infantile gaiety that was one of his graces, and of which we have already spoken, all felt at ease in his presence, and from his whole person joy seemed to radiate. His ruddy and fresh complexion, and his

white teeth, all of which were well preserved, and which he showed when he laughed, gave him that open and easy air which makes us say of a man that he is a good fellow, and of an old man, he is a good man. This was, we remember, the effect he produced on Napoleon. At the first view, and to one who saw him for the first time, he was nothing more than a good man ; but if one spent a few hours with him, and saw him in a thoughtful mood, little by little the good man became transfigured, and became ineffably imposing ; his large and serious forehead, rendered noble by his white hair, became noble also by meditation ; majesty was developed from this goodness, yet the radiance of goodness remained ; and one felt something of the emotion that he would experience in seeing a smiling angel slowly spread his wings without ceasing to smile. Respect, unutterable respect, penetrated you by degrees, and made its way to your heart ; and you felt that you had before you one of those strong, tried, and indulgent souls, where the thought is so great that it cannot be other than gentle.

As we have seen, prayer, celebration of the religious offices, alms, consoling the afflicted, the cultivation of a little bit of ground, fraternity, frugality, self-sacrifice, confidence, study, and work, filled up each day of his life. Filled up is exactly the word ; and, in fact, the Bishop's day was full to the brim with good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Nevertheless it was not complete if cold or rainy weather prevented his passing an hour or two in the evening, when the two women had retired, in his garden before going to sleep. It seemed as if it were a sort of rite with him to prepare himself for sleep by meditating in presence of the great spectacle of the starry firmament. Sometimes at a late hour of the night, if the two women were awake, they would hear him slowly promenading the walks. He was there alone with himself, collected, tranquil, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with the serenity of the

skies, moved in the darkness by the visible splendours of the constellations, and the invisible splendour of God, opening his soul to the thoughts which fall from the Unknown. In such moments, offering up his heart at the hour when the flowers of night exhale their perfume, lighted like a lamp in the centre of the starry night, expanding his soul in ecstasy in the midst of the universal radiance of creation, he could not himself perhaps have told what was passing in his own mind ; he felt something depart from him, and something descend upon him—mysterious interchanges of the depths of the soul with the depths of the universe.

He contemplated the grandeur and the presence of God ; the eternity of the future, strange mystery ; the eternity of the past, mystery yet more strange ; all the infinities deep hidden in every direction about him ; and, without essaying to comprehend the incomprehensible, he saw it. He did not study God ; he was dazzled by the thought. He reflected upon these magnificent unions of atoms which give visible forms to Nature, revealing forces in establishing them, creating individualities in unity, proportions in extension, the innumerable in the infinite, and through light producing beauty. These unions are forming and dissolving continually—thence life and death.

He would sit upon a wooden bench leaning against a broken trellis, and look at the stars through the irregular outlines of his fruit trees. This quarter of an acre of ground, so poorly cultivated, so cumbered with shed and ruins, was dear to him, and satisfied him.

What more was needed by this old man who divided the leisure hours of his life, where he had so little leisure, between gardening in the day-time and contemplation at night ? Was not this narrow inclosure, with the sky for a background, enough to enable him to adore God in his most beautiful as well as in his most sublime works ? Indeed, is not that all, and what more can be desired ? A little garden to walk, and immensity to reflect upon. At

his feet something to cultivate and gather; above his head something to study and meditate upon; a few flowers on the earth, and all the stars in the sky.

## XIV.

## WHAT HE THOUGHT.

## A FINAL word.

As these details may, particularly in the times in which we live, and to use an expression now in fashion,—give the Bishop of D—— a certain “pantheistic” physiognomy, and give rise to the belief, whether to his blame or to his praise, that he had one of those personal philosophies peculiar to our age, which sometimes spring up in solitary minds, and gather materials and grow until they replace religion, we insist upon it that no one who knew Monseigneur Bienvenu would have felt justified in any such idea. What enlightened this man was the heart. His wisdom was formed from the light that came thence.

He had no systems, but many deeds. Abstruse speculations are full of headaches; nothing indicates that he would risk his mind in mysticisms. The apostle may be bold, but the bishop should be timid. He would probably have scrupled to sound too deeply certain problems, reserved, in some sort, for great and terrible minds. There is a sacred horror in the approaches to mysticism; sombre openings are yawning there, but something tells you, as you near the brink—enter not. Woe to him who does.

There are geniuses who, in the fathomless depths of abstraction and pure speculation—situated, so to say, above all dogmas, present their ideas to God. Their prayer audaciously offers a discussion. Their worship is questioning. This is direct religion, full of anxiety and of responsibility for him who would scale its walls.

Human thought has no limit. At its risk and peril, it analyses and dissects its own fascination. We could almost

say that, by a sort of splendid reaction, it fascinates nature ; the mysterious world which surrounds us returns what it receives ; it is probable that the contemplators are contemplated. However that may be, there are men on the earth—if they are nothing more—who distinctly perceive the heights of the absolute in the horizon of their contemplation, and who have the terrible vision of the infinite mountain. Monseigneur Bienvenu was not one of those men ; Monseigneur Bienvenu was not a genius. He would have dreaded those sublimities from which some very great men, like Swedenborg and Pascal, have glided into insanity. Certainly, these tremendous reveries have their moral use ; and by these arduous routes there is an approach to ideal perfection. But for his part, he took the straight road, which is short—the Gospel.

He did not attempt to make his robe assume the folds of Elijah's mantle ; he cast no ray of the future upon the dark scroll of events ; he sought not to condense into a flame the glimmer of things ; he had nothing of the prophet and nothing of the magician. His humble soul loved ; that was all.

That he raised his prayer to a superhuman aspiration, is probable ; but one can no more pray too much than love too much ; and, if it was a heresy to pray beyond the written form, St. Theresa and St. Jerome were heretics.

He inclined towards the distressed and the repentant. The universe appeared to him like a vast disease ; he perceived fever everywhere, he ausculated suffering everywhere, and, without essaying to solve the enigma, he endeavoured to staunch the wound. The formidable spectacle of created things developed a tenderness in him ; he was always busy in finding for himself, and inspiring others with the best way of sympathizing and solacing ; the whole world was to this good and rare priest a permanent subject of sadness seeking to be consoled.

There are men who labour for the extraction of gold ; he worked for the extraction of pity. The misery of the universe was his mine. Grief everywhere was only an occasion for good always. *Love one another* ; he declared that to be complete ; he desired nothing more, and it was his whole doctrine. One day, this man, who counted himself “ a philosopher,” this senator before mentioned, said to the Bishop: “ See now, what the world shows ; each fighting against all others ; the strongest man is the best man. Your *love one another* is a stupidity.” “ Well,” replied Monseigneur Bienvenu, without discussion, “ if it be a stupidity, the soul ought to shut itself up in it, like the pearl in the oyster.” And he shut himself up in it, he lived in it, he was satisfied absolutely with it, laying aside the mysterious questions which attract and which dishearten, the unfathomable depths of abstraction, the precipices of metaphysics—all those profundities, to the apostle converging upon God, to the atheist upon annihilation ; destiny, good and evil, the war of being against being, the conscience of man, the thought-like dreams of the animal, the transformation of death, the recapitulation of existences contained in the tomb, the incomprehensible engrafting of successive affections upon the enduring *me*, the essence, the substance, the Nothing, and the Something, the soul, nature, liberty, necessity ; difficult problems, sinister depths, towards which are drawn the gigantic archangels of the human race ; fearful abyss, that Lucretius, Manou, St. Paul, and Dante contemplate with that flaming eye which seems, looking steadfastly into the infinite, to enkindle the very stars.

Monsieur Bienvenu was simply a man who accepted these mysterious questions without examining them, without agitating them, and without troubling his own mind with them ; and who had in his soul a deep respect for the mystery which enveloped them.



## Book Second

### T H E F A L L

#### I.

##### THE NIGHT OF A DAY'S TRAMP.

A N hour before sunset, on the evening of a day in the beginning of October, 1815, a man travelling afoot entered the little town of D——. The few persons who at this time were at their windows or their doors, regarded this traveller with a sort of distrust. It would have been hard to find a passer-by more wretched in appearance. He was a man of middle height, stout and hardy, in the strength of maturity ; he might have been forty-six or seven. A slouched leather cap half hid his face, bronzed by the sun and wind, and dripping with sweat. His shaggy breast was seen through the coarse yellow shirt which at the neck was fastened by a small silver anchor ; he wore a cravat twisted like a rope ; coarse blue trowsers, worn and shabby, white on one knee, and with holes in the other ; an old ragged grey blouse, patched on one side with a piece of green cloth sewed with twine ; upon his back was a well-filled knapsack,

strongly buckled and quite new. In his hand he carried an enormous knotted stick : his stockingless feet were in hob-nailed shoes ; his hair was cropped and his beard long.

The sweat, the heat, his long walk, and the dust, added an indescribable meanness to his tattered appearance.

His hair was shorn, but bristly, for it had begun to grow a little, and seemingly had not been cut for some time. Nobody knew him ; he was evidently a traveller. Whence had he come ? From the south—perhaps from the sea ; for he was making his entrance into D—— by the same road by which, seven months before, the Emperor Napoleon went from Cannes to Paris. This man must have walked all day long ; for he appeared very weary. Some women of the old city which is at the lower part of the town, had seen him stop under the trees of the Boulevard Gassendi, and drink at the fountain which is at the end of the promenade. He must have been very thirsty, for some children who followed him, saw him stop not two hundred steps further on and drink again at the fountain in the market-place.

When he reached the corner of the Rue Poichevert he turned to the left and went towards the Mayor's office. He went in, and a quarter of an hour afterwards he came out.

The man raised his cap humbly and saluted a gendarme who was seated near the door, upon the stone bench which General Drouot mounted on the fourth of March, to read to the terrified inhabitants of D—— the proclamation of the *Golfe Juan*.

Without returning his salutation, the gendarme looked at him attentively, watched him for some distance, and then went into the city hall.

There was then in D—— a good inn called *La Croix-de-Colbas* ; its host was named Jacquin Labarre, a man held in some consideration in the town on account of his relationship with another Labarre, who kept an inn at Grenoble

called *Trois Dauphins*, and who had served in the Guides. At the time of the landing of the Emperor there had been much noise in the country about this inn of the *Trois Dauphins*. It was said that General Bertrand, disguised as a wagoner, had made frequent journeys thither in the month of January, and that he had distributed crosses of honour to the soldiers, and handfuls of Napoleons to the country folks. The truth is that when the Emperor, when he entered Grenoble, refused to take up his quarters at the Prefecture, saying to the Monsieur, after thanking him, "*I am going to the house of a brave man, with whom I am acquainted,*" and he went to the *Trois Dauphins*. This glory of Labarre of the *Trois Dauphins* was reflected twenty-five miles to Labarre of the *Croix-de-Colbas*. It was a common saying in the town : "*He is the cousin of the Grenoble man !*"

The traveller turned his steps towards this inn, which was the best in the place, and went at once into the kitchen, which opened out of the street. All the ranges were fuming, and a great fire was burning briskly in the chimney-place. Mine host, who was at the same time head cook, was going from the fire-place to the saucepans, very busy superintending an excellent dinner for some wagoners who were laughing and talking noisily in the next room. Whoever has travelled knows that nobody lives better than wagoners. A fat marmot, flanked by white partridges and goose, was turning on a long spit before the fire ; upon the ranges were cooking two large carps from Lake Lauzet, and a trout from Lake Alloz.

The host, hearing the door open, and a new comer enter said, without raising his eyes from his ranges—

“What will Monsieur have?”

“Something to eat and lodging.”

“Nothing more easy,” said mine host, but on turning his head and taking an observation of the traveller, he added, “for pay.”

The man drew from his pocket a large leather purse, and answered,

“I have money.”

“Then,” said mine host, “I am at your service.”

The man put his purse back into his pocket, took off his knapsack and put it down hard by the door, and holding his stick in his hand, sat down on a low stool by the fire. D—— being in the mountains, the evenings of October are cold there.

However, as the host passed backwards and forwards, he kept a careful eye on the traveller.

“Is dinner almost ready?” said the man.

“Directly,” said mine host.

While the new-comer was warming himself with his back turned, the worthy innkeeper, Jacquin Labarre, took a pencil from his pocket, and then tore off the corner of an old paper which he pulled from a little table near the window. On the margin he wrote a line or two, folded it, and handed the scrap of paper to a child, who appeared to serve him as lacquey and scullion at the same time. The innkeeper whispered a word to the boy, and he ran off in the direction of the mayor’s office.

The traveller saw nothing of this.

He asked a second time: “Is dinner ready?”

“Yes; in a few moments,” said the host.

The boy came back with the paper. The host unfolded it hurriedly, as one who is expecting an answer. He seemed to read with attention, then throwing his head on one side, thought for a moment. Then he took a step towards the traveller, who seemed drowned in troublous thought.

“Monsieur,” said he, “I cannot receive you.”

The traveller half rose from his seat.

“Why? Are you afraid I shall not pay you, or do you want me to pay in advance? I have money, I tell you.”

“It is not that.”

“What then?”

“You have money —”

“Yes,” said the man.

“And I,” said the host; “I have no room.”

“Well, put me in the stable,” quietly replied the man.

“I cannot.”

“Why?”

“Because the horses take all the room.”

“Well,” responded the man, “a corner in the garret; a truss of straw, we will see about that after dinner.”

“I cannot give you any dinner.”

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, appeared serious to the traveller. He got up.

“Ah, bah! but I am dying with hunger. I have walked since sunrise; I have travelled twelve leagues. I will pay, and I want something to eat.”

“I have nothing,” said the host.

The man burst into a laugh, and turned towards the fireplace and the ranges.

“Nothing! and all that?”

“All that is engaged.”

“By whom?”

“By those persons, the wagoners.”

“How many are there of them?”

“Twelve.”

“There is enough there for twenty.”

“They have engaged and paid for it all in advance.”

The man sat down again and said, without raising his voice: “I am at an inn. I am hungry, and I shall stay.”

The host bent down his ear, and said in a voice which made him tremble,—

“Go away!”

At these words the traveller, who was bent over, poking some embers in the fire with the iron-shod end of his stick,

turned suddenly around, and opened his mouth, as if to reply, when the host, looking steadily at him, added in the same low tone : “ Stop, no more of that. Shall I tell you your name? your name is Jean Valjean, now shall I tell you *who* you are? When I saw you enter, I suspected something. I sent to the mayor’s office, and here is the reply. Can you read?” So saying, he held towards him the open paper, which had just come from the mayor. The man cast a look upon it ; the innkeeper, after a short silence, said : “ It is my custom to be polite to all : Go !”

The man bowed his head, picked up his knapsack, and went out.

He took the principal street ; he walked at random, slinking near the houses like a sad and humiliated man : he did not once turn around. If he had turned, he would have seen the innkeeper of the *Croix-de-Colbas*, standing in his doorway with all his guests, and the passers-by gathered about him, speaking excitedly, and pointing him out ; and from the looks of fear and distrust which were exchanged, he would have guessed that before long his arrival would be the talk of the whole town.

He saw nothing of all this : people overwhelmed with trouble do not look behind ; they know only too well that misfortune follows them.

He walked along in this way some time, going by chance down streets unknown to him, and forgetting fatigue, as is the case in sorrow. Suddenly he felt a pang of hunger ; night was at hand, and he looked around to see if he could not discover a lodging.

The good inn was closed against him : he sought some humble tavern, some poor cellar.

Just then a light shone at the end of the street ; he saw a pine branch, hanging by an iron bracket, against the white sky of the twilight. He went thither.

It was a tavern in the Rue Chaffaut.

The traveller stopped a moment and looked in at the little window upon the low hall of the tavern, lighted by a small lamp upon a table, and a great fire in the chimney-place. Some men were drinking, and the host was warming himself; an iron pot hung over the fire seething in the blaze.

Two doors lead into this tavern, which is also a sort of eating-house—one from the street, the other from a small court full of rubbish.

The traveller did not dare to enter by the street door; he slipped into the court, stopped again, then timidly raised the latch, and pushed open the door.

“Who is it?” said the host.

“One who wants supper and a bed.”

“All right: here you can sup and sleep.”

He went in, all the men who were drinking turned towards him; the lamp shining on one side of his face, the firelight on the other, they examined him for some time as he was taking off his knapsack.

The host said to him: “There is the fire; the supper is cooking in the pot; come and warm yourself, comrade.”

He seated himself near the fireplace and stretched his feet out towards the fire, half dead with fatigue: an inviting odour came from the pot. All that could be seen of his face under his slouched cap assumed a vague appearance of comfort, which tempered the sorrowful aspect given him by long-continued suffering.

His profile was strong, energetic, and sad; a physiognomy strangely marked: at first it appeared humble, but it soon became severe. His eye shone beneath his eyebrows like a fire beneath a thicket.

However, one of the men at the table was a fisherman who had put up his horse at the stable of Labarre's inn before entering the tavern of the Rue de Chaffaut. It so happened that he had met, that same morning, this

suspicious-looking stranger travelling between Bras d'Asse and—I forget the place, I think it is Escoublon. Now, on meeting him, the man, who seemed already very much fatigued had asked him to take him on behind, to which the fisherman responded only by doubling his pace. The fisherman, half an hour before, had been one of the throng about Jacquin Labarre, and had himself related his unpleasant meeting with him to the people of the *Croix-de-Colbas*. He beckoned to the tavern-keeper to come to him, which he did. They exchanged a few words in a low voice ; the traveller had again relapsed into thought.

The tavern-keeper returned to the fire, and laying his hand roughly on his shoulder, said harshly,—

“ You are going to clear out from here !”

The stranger turned around and said mildly,—

“ Ah ! Do you know ?”

“ Yes.”

“ They sent me away from the other inn.”

“ And we turn you out of this.”

“ Where would you have me go ?”

“ Somewhere else.”

The man took up his stick and knapsack, and went off. As he went out, some children who had followed him from the *Croix-de-Colbas*, and seemed to be waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned angrily and threatened them with his stick, and they scattered like a flock of birds.

He passed the prison : an iron chain hung from the door attached to a bell. He rang.

The grating opened.

“ Monsieur Turnkey,” he said, taking off his cap respectfully, “ will you open and let me stay here to-night ?”

A voice answered :

“ A prison is not a tavern : get yourself arrested and we will open.”

The grating closed.

He went into a small street where there are many gardens ; some of them are inclosed only by hedges, which enlivened the street. Among them he saw a pretty little one-story house, where there was a light in the window. He looked in as he had done at the tavern. It was a large whitewashed room, with a bed draped with calico, and a cradle in the corner, some wooden chairs, and a double-barrelled gun hung against the wall. A table was set in the centre of the room ; a brass lamp lighted the coarse white table-cloth ; a tin mug full of wine shone like silver, and the brown soup-dish was smoking. At this table sat a man about forty years old, with a joyous, open countenance, who was trotting a little child upon his knee. Near by him a young woman was suckling another child ; the father was laughing, the child was laughing, and the mother was smiling.

The traveller remained a moment contemplating this sweet and touching scene. What were his thoughts ? He only could have told : probably he thought that this happy home would be hospitable, and that where he beheld so much happiness, he might perhaps find a little pity.

He rapped faintly on the window.

No one heard him.

He rapped a second time.

He heard the woman say, " Husband, I think I heard some one rap."

" No," replied the husband.

He rapped a third time. The husband got up, took the lamp, and opened the door.

He was a tall man, half peasant, half mechanic. He wore a large leather apron that reached to his left shoulder, and formed a pocket containing a hammer, a red handkerchief, a powder-horn, and all sorts of things which the girdle held up. He turned his head ; his shirt, wide and open, showed his bull-like throat, white and naked ; he had thick brows ; enormous black whiskers, and prominent eyes ; the lower

part of the face was covered, and had withal that air of being at home which is quite indescribable.

“ Monsieur,” said the traveller, “ I beg your pardon ; for pay can you give me a plate of soup and a corner of the shed in your garden to sleep in ? Tell me ; can you, for pay ? ”

“ Who are you ? ” demanded the master of the house.

The man replied : “ I have come from Puy-Moisson ; I have walked all day ; I have come twelve leagues. Can you, if I pay ? ”

“ I wouldn’t refuse to lodge any proper person who would pay,” said the peasant ; “ but why do you not go to the inn ? ”

“ There is no room.”

“ Bah ! That is not possible. It is neither a fair nor a market day. Have you been to Labarre’s house ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Well ? ”

The traveller replied hesitatingly : “ I don’t know ; he didn’t take me ? ”

“ Have you been to that place in the Rue Chaffaut ? ”

The embarrassment of the stranger increased ; he stammered : “ They didn’t take me either.”

The peasant’s face assumed an expression of distrust : he looked over the new comer from head to foot, and suddenly exclaimed, with a sort of shudder : “ Are you the man ? ”

He looked again at the stranger, stepped back, put the lamp on the table, and took down his gun.

His wife heard the words, “ *are you the man*,” started up, and, clasping her two children, precipitately took refuge behind her husband ; she looked at the stranger with affright, her neck bare, her eyes dilated, murmuring in a low tone : “ *Tso maraude !* ” \*

\* Dialect of the French Alps, “ *Chat de maraude*. ”

All this happened in less time than it takes to read it ; after examining the man for a moment, as one would a viper, the man advanced to the door and said :

“Get out !”

“For pity’s sake, a glass of water,” said the man.

“A gun-shot,” said the peasant, and then he closed the door violently, and the man heard two heavy bolts drawn. A moment afterwards the window-shutters were shut, and noisily barred.

Night came on apace ; the cold Alpine winds were blowing ; by the light of the expiring day the stranger perceived in one of the gardens which fronted the street a kind of hut which seemed to be made of turf ; he boldly cleared a wooden fence and found himself in the garden. He neared the hut ; its door was a narrow, low entrance ; it resembled, in its construction, the shanties which the road-labourers put up for their temporary accommodation. He, doubtless, thought that it was, in fact, the lodging of a road-labourer. He was suffering both from cold and hunger. He had resigned himself to the latter ; but there at least was a shelter from the cold. These huts are not usually occupied at night. He got down and crawled into the hut. It was warm there, and he found a good bed of straw. He rested a moment upon this bed motionless from fatigue ; then, as his knapsack on his back troubled him, and it would make a good pillow, he began to unbuckle the straps. Just then he heard a ferocious growling, and looking up saw the head of an enormous bull-dog at the opening of the hut.

It was a dog-kennel !

He was himself vigorous and formidable ; seizing his stick, he made a shield of his knapsack, and got out of the hut as best he could, but not without enlarging the rents of his already tattered garments.

He made his way also out of the garden, but backwards ; being obliged, out of respect to the dog, to have recourse

to that kind of manœuvre with his stick, which adepts in this sort of fencing call *la rose couverte*.

When he had, not without difficulty, got over the fence, he again found himself alone in the street without lodging, roof, or shelter, driven even from the straw-bed of that wretched dog-kennel. He threw himself rather than seated himself on a stone, and it appears that some one who was passing heard him exclaim, “I am not even a dog !”

Then he arose, and began to tramp again, taking his way out of the town, hoping to find some tree or haystack beneath which he could shelter himself. He walked on for some time, his head bowed down. When he thought he was far away from all human habitation he raised his eyes, and looked about him inquiringly. He was in a field: before him was a low hillock covered with stubble, which after the harvest looks like a shaved head. The sky was very dark; it was not simply the darkness of night, but there were very low clouds, which seemed to rest upon the hills, and covered the whole heavens. A little of the twilight, however, lingered in the zenith; and as the moon was about to rise these clouds formed in mid-heaven a vault of whitish light, from which a glimmer fell upon the earth.

The earth was then lighter than the sky, which produces a peculiarly sinister effect, and the hill, poor and mean in contour, loomed out dim and pale upon the gloomy horizon: the whole prospect was hideous, mean, lugubrious, and insignificant. There was nothing in the field or upon the hill, but one ugly tree, a few steps from the traveller, which seemed to be twisting and contorting itself.

This man was evidently far from possessing those delicate perceptions of intelligence and feeling which produce a sensitiveness to the mysterious aspects of nature; still, there was in the sky, in this hillock, plain, and tree, something so profoundly desolate, that after a moment of motionless contem-

plation, he turned back hastily to the road. There are moments when nature appears hostile.

He retraced his steps ; the gates of D—— were closed. D——, which sustained seiges in the religious wars, was still surrounded, in 1815, by old walls flanked by square towers, since demolished. He passed through a breach and entered the town.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening : as he did not know the streets, he walked at hazard.

So he came to the Prefecture, then to the Seminary ; on passing by the Cathedral square, he shook his fist at the church.

At the corner of this square stands a printing-office ; there were first printed the proclamations of the Emperor, and the Imperial Guard to the army, brought from the island of Elba, and dictated by Napoleon himself.

Exhausted with fatigue, and hoping for nothing better, he lay down on a stone bench in front of this printing-office.

Just then an old woman came out of church. She saw the man laying there in the dark, and said,—

“What are you doing there, my friend?”

He replied harshly, and with anger in his tone,—

“You see my good woman, I am going to sleep.”

The good woman, who really merited the name, was Madame la Marquise de R——.

“Upon the bench?” said she.

“For nineteen years I have had a wooden mattress,” said the man ; “to-night I have a stone one.”

“You have been a soldier.”

“Yes, my good woman, a soldier.”

“Why don't you go to the inn?”

“Because I have no money.”

“Alas !” said Madame de R——, “I have only four sous in my purse.”

“Give them, then.” The man took the four sous, and Madame de R——continued,—

You cannot find lodging for so little in any inn. But have you tried? You cannot pass the night so. You must be cold and hungry. They should give you lodging for charity.”

“I have knocked at every door.”

“Well, what then?”

“Everybody has driven me away.”

The good woman touched the man’s arm and pointed out to him, on the other side of the square, a little low house beside the bishop’s palace.

“You have knocked at every door?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“Have you knocked at that one there?”

“No.”

“Knock there.”

## II.

### PRUDENCE COMMENDED TO WISDOM.

THAT evening, after his walk in the town, the Bishop of D—— remained quite late in his room. He was busy with his great work on Duty, which unfortunately is left incomplete. He carefully dissected all that the Fathers and Doctors have said on this serious topic. His book was divided into two parts: First, the duties of all: Secondly, the duties of each, according to his position in life. The duties of all are the principal duties; there are four of them, as set forth by St. Matthew: duty towards God (Matt. vi.); duty towards ourselves (Matt. v. 29, 30); duty towards our neighbour (Matt. vii. 12); and duty towards animals (Matt. vi. 20, 25). As to other duties, the Bishop found them defined and prescribed elsewhere; those of

sovereigns and subjects in the Epistle to the Romans : those of magistrates, wives, mothers, and young men, by St. Peter ; those of husbands, fathers, children, and servants, in the Epistle to the Ephesians ; those of the faithful in the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and those of virgins in the Epistle to the Corinthians. He collated with much labour these injunctions into a harmonious whole, which he wished to offer to souls.

At eight o'clock he was still at work, writing with some inconvenience on little slips of paper, with a large book open on his knees, when Madame Magloire, as usual, came in to take the silver from the panel near the bed. A moment after, the Bishop, knowing that the table was laid, and that his sister was perhaps waiting, closed his book and went into the dining-room.

This dining-room was an oblong apartment, with a fire-place, and with a door upon the street, as we have said, and a window opening into the garden.

Madame Magloire had just finished placing the plates.

While she was arranging the table, she was talking with Mademoiselle Baptiste.

The lamp was on the table, which was near the fire-place, where a good fire was burning.

One can readily fancy these two women, both past their sixtieth year : Madame Magloire, small, fat, and quick in her movements ; Mademoiselle Baptiste, sweet, thin, fragile, a little taller than her brother, wore a silk puce-color dress, in the style of 1806, which she had bought at that time in Paris, and which still lasted her. To borrow a common mode of expression, which has the merit of saying in a single word what a page would hardly express, Madame Magloire had the air of a peasant, and Mademoiselle Baptiste that of a lady. Madame Magloire wore a white funnel-shaped cap : a gold *jeannette* at her neck, the only bit of feminine jewelry in the house, a snowy fichu just peering out above a black frieze dress, with wide short

sleeves, a green and red checked calico apron tied at the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same pinned up in front ; on her feet, she wore coarse shoes and yellow stockings like the women of Marseilles. Mademoiselle Baptistine's dress was cut after the fashion of 1806, short waist, narrow skirt, sleeves with epaulettes, and with flaps and buttons. Her grey hair was hid under a frizzed front called *à l'enfant*. Madame Magloire had an intelligent, clever, and lively air ; the two corners of her mouth unequally raised, and the upper lip projecting beyond the under one, gave something morose and imperious to her expression. So long as Monseigneur was silent, she talked to him without reserve, and with a mingled respect and freedom ; but from the time that he opened his mouth as we have seen, she implicitly obeyed like Mademoiselle. Mademoiselle Baptistine, however, did not speak. She confined herself to obeying, and endeavouring to please. Even when she was young, she was not pretty ; she had large and very prominent blue eyes, and a long pinched nose, but her whole face and person, as we said in the outset, breathed an ineffable goodness. She had been fore-ordained to meekness, but faith, charity, hope, these three virtues which gently warm the heart, had gradually sublimated this meekness into sanctity. Nature had made her a lamb ; religion had made her an angel. Poor, sainted woman ! gentle, but lost souvenir.

Mademoiselle Baptistine has so often related what occurred at the Bishop's house that evening, that many persons are still living who can recall the minutest details.

Just as the Bishop entered, Madame Magloire was speaking with some warmth. She was talking to *Mademoiselle* upon a familiar subject, and one to which the Bishop was quite accustomed. It was a discussion on the means of fastening the front door.

It seems that while Madame Magloire was out making

provision for supper, she had heard the news in sundry places. There was talk that an ill-favoured runaway, a suspicious vagabond, had arrived and was lurking somewhere in the town, and that some unpleasant adventures might befall those who should come home late that night ; besides, that the police was very bad, as the prefect and the mayor did not like one another, and were hoping to injure each other by untoward events ; that it was the part of wise people to be their own police, and to protect their own persons ; and that every one ought to be careful to shut up, bolt, and bar his house properly, and *secure his door thoroughly*.

Madame Magloire dwelt upon these last words ; but the Bishop, having come from a cold room, seated himself before the fire and began to warm himself, and then, he was thinking of something else. He did not hear a word of what was let fall by Madame Magloire, and she repeated it. Then Mademoiselle Baptistine, endeavouring to satisfy Madame Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say timidly,—

“ Brother, do you hear what Madame Magloire says ?”

“ I heard something of it indistinctly,” said the Bishop. Then turning his chair half round, putting his hands on his knees, and raising towards the old servant his cordial and good-humoured face, which the firelight shone upon, he said : “ Well, well ! what is the matter ? Are we in any great danger ?”

Then Madame Magloire began her story again, unconsciously exaggerating it a little. It appeared that a bare-footed gipsy man, a sort of dangerous beggar, was in the town. He had gone for lodging to Jacquin Labarre, who had refused to receive him ; he had been seen to enter the town by the boulevard Gassendi, and to roam through the street at dusk. A man with a knapsack and a rope, and a terrible-looking face.

“Indeed!” said the Bishop.

This readiness to question her encouraged Madame Magloire ; it seemed to indicate that the Bishop was really well nigh alarmed. She continued triumphantly : “Yes, Monseigneur ; it is true. There will something happen to-night in the town : everybody says so. The police is so badly organized (a convenient repetition). To live in this mountainous country, and not even to have street lamps ! If one goes out, it is dark as a pocket. And I say, Monseigneur, and Mademoiselle says also——”

“Me?” interrupted the sister ; “I say nothing. Whatever my brother does is well done.”

Madame Magloire went on as if she had not heard this protestation :

“We say that this house is not safe at all ; and if Monseigneur will permit me, I will go and tell Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, to come and put the old bolts in the door again ; they are there, and it will take but a minute. I say we must have bolts, were it only for to-night ; for I say that a door which opens by a latch on the outside to the first comer, nothing could be more horrible : and then Monseigneur has the habit of always saying ‘Come in,’ even at midnight. But, my goodness ! there is no need even to ask leave——”

At this moment there was a violent knock on the door.

“Come in !” said the Bishop.

### III.

#### THE HEROISM OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE.

THE door opened.

It opened quickly, quite wide, as if pushed by some one boldly and with energy.

A man entered.

That man, we know already ; it was the traveller we have seen wandering about in search of a lodging.

He came in, took one step, and paused, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his back, his stick in his hand, and a rough, hard, tired, and fierce look in his eyes, as seen by the firelight. He was hideous. It was an apparition of ill omen.

Madame Magloire had not even the strength to scream. She stood trembling with her mouth open.

Mademoiselle Baptistine turned, saw the man enter, and started up half-alarmed ; then, slowly turning back again towards the fire, she looked at her brother, and her face resumed its usual calmness and serenity.

The Bishop looked upon the man with a tranquil eye.

As he was opening his mouth to speak, doubtless to ask the stranger what he wanted, the man, leaning with both hands on his club, glanced from one to another in turn, and without waiting for the Bishop to speak, said in a loud voice :

“ See here ! My name is Jean Valjean. I am a convict ; I have been nineteen years in the galleys. Four days ago I was set free, and started for Pontarlier, which is my destination ; during these four days I have walked from Toulon. To-day I have walked twelve leagues. When I reached this place this evening I went to an inn, and they sent me away on account of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the Mayor’s office as was necessary. I went to another inn ; they said : ‘ Get out ! ’ It was the same with one as with another ; nobody would have me. I went to the prison, and the turnkey would not let me in. I crept into a dog kennel, the dog bit me, and drove me away as if he had been a man ; you would have said that he knew who I was. I went into the fields to sleep beneath the stars : there were no stars ; I thought it would rain, and there was

no good God to stop the drops, so I came back to the town to get the shelter of some doorway. There, in the square, I lay down upon a stone ; a good woman showed me your house, and said : ‘ Knock there ! ’ I have knocked. What is this place ? Are you an inn ? I have money ; my savings, one hundred and nine francs and fifteen sous which I have earned in the galleys by my work for nineteen years. I will pay. What do I care ? I have money. I am very tired—twelve leagues on foot, and I am so hungry. Can I stay ? ”

“ Madame Magloire,” said the Bishop, “ put on another plate.”

The man took three steps, and came near the lamp which stood on the table. “ Stop,” he exclaimed ; as if he had not been understood, “ not that, did you understand me ? I am a galley-slave—a convict—I am just from the galleys.” He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper, which he unfolded. “ There is my passport, yellow, as you see. That is enough to get me kicked out wherever I go. Will you read it ? I know how to read, I do. I learned in the galleys. There is a school there for those who care for it. See, here is what they have put in the passport : ‘ Jean Valjean, a liberated convict, native of,—’ you don’t care for that, ‘ has been nineteen years in the galleys ; five years for burglary : fourteen years for having attempted four times to escape. This man is very dangerous.’ There you have it ! Everybody has thrust me out ; will you receive me ? Is this an inn ? Can you give me something to eat, and a place to sleep ? Have you a stable ? ”

“ Madame Magloire,” said the Bishop, “ put some sheets on the bed in the alcove.”

We have already described the kind of obedience yielded by these two women.

Madame Magloire went out to fulfil her orders.

The Bishop turned to the man :

“ Monsieur, sit down and warm yourself; we are going to take supper presently, and your bed will be made ready while you sup.”

At last the man quite understood; his face, the expression of which till then had been gloomy and hard, now expressed stupefaction, doubt, and joy, and became absolutely wonderful. He began to stutter like a madman.

“ True? What! You will keep me? you won’t drive me away? a convict! You call me *Monsieur* and don’t say ‘Get out, dog!’ as everybody else does. I thought that you would send me away, so I told first off who I am. Oh! the fine woman who sent me here! I shall have a supper! a bed like other people with mattress and sheets—a bed! It is nineteen years that I have not slept on a bed. You are really willing that I should stay? You are good people! Besides I have money; I will pay well. I beg your pardon, Monsieur Innkeeper, what is your name? I will pay all you say. You are a fine man. You are an innkeeper, aren’t you?”

“ I am a priest who lives here,” said the Bishop.

“ A priest,” said the man. “ Oh, noble Priest! Then you do not ask any money? You are the Curé, an’t you? the Curé of this big Church? Yes, that’s it. How stupid I am; I didn’t notice your cap.”

While speaking, he had deposited his knapsack and stick in the corner, replaced his passport in his pocket, and sat down. Mademoiselle Baptistine looked at him pleasantly. He continued:

“ You are humane, Monsieur Curé; you don’t despise me. A good priest is a good thing. Then you don’t want me to pay you?”

“ No,” said the Bishop, “ keep your money. How much have you? You said a hundred and nine francs, I think.”

“ And fifteen sous,” added the man.

“ One hundred and nine francs and fifteen sous. And how long did it take you to earn that?”

“Nineteen years.”

“Nineteen years !”

The Bishop sighed deeply.

The man continued : “I have all my money yet. In four days I have spent only twenty-five sous which I earned by unloading wagons at Grasse. As you are an abbé, I must tell you, we have an almoner in the galleys. And then one day I saw a bishop; Monseigneur, they called him. It was the Bishop of Majore from Marseilles. He is the curé who is over the curés. You see—beg pardon, how I bungle saying it, but for me, it is so far off ! you know what we are. He said mass in the centre of the place on an altar ; he had a pointed gold thing on his head, that shone in the sun ; it was noon. We were drawn up in line on three sides, with cannons and matches lighted before us. We could not see him well. He spoke to us, but he was not near enough, we did not understand him. That is what a bishop is.”

While he was talking, the Bishop shut the door, which he had left wide open.

Madame Magloire brought in a plate and set it on the table.

“Madame Magloire,” said the Bishop, “put this plate as near the fire as you can.” Then turning towards his guest, he added : “The night wind is raw in the Alps ; you must be cold, Monsieur.”

Every time he said this word Monsieur, with his gently solemn and heartily hospitable voice, the man’s countenance lighted up. *Monsieur* to a convict is a glass of water to a man dying of thirst at sea. Ignominy thirsts for respect.

“The lamp,” said the Bishop, “gives a very poor light.”

Madame Magloire understood him, and going to his bed-chamber, took from the mantle the two silver candlesticks, lighted the candles, and placed them on the table.

“Monsieur Curé,” said the man, “you are good ; you

don't despise me. You take me into your house ; you light your candles for me, and I haven't hid from you where I came from, and how miserable I am."

The Bishop, who was sitting near him, touched his hand gently and said: "You need not tell me who you are. This is not my house ; it is the house of Christ. It does not ask any comer whether he has a name, but whether he has an affliction. You are suffering ; you are hungry and thirsty ; be welcome. And do not thank me ; do not tell me that I take you into my house. This is the home of no man, except him who needs an asylum. I tell you, who are a traveller, that you are more at home here than I ; whatever is here is yours. What need have I to know your name ? Besides, before you told me I knew it."

The man opened his eyes in astonishment :

"Really ? You knew my name ?"

"Yes," answered the Bishop, "your name is my brother."

"Stop, stop, Monsieur Curé," exclaimed the man. "I was famished when I came in, but you are so kind that now I don't know what I am ; that is all gone."

The Bishop looked at him again and said :

"You have seen much suffering ?"

"Oh, the red blouse, the ball and chain, the plank to sleep on, the heat, the cold, the galley's crew, the lash, the double chain for nothing, the dungeon for a word—even when sick in bed, the chain. The dogs, the dogs are happier ! nineteen years ! and I am forty-six, and now a yellow passport. That is all."

"Yes," answered the Bishop, "you have left a place of suffering. But listen, there will be more joy in heaven over the tears of a repentant sinner than over the white robes of a hundred good men. If you are leaving that sorrowful place with hate and anger against men, you are worthy of compassion ; if you leave it with goodwill, gentleness, and peace, you are better than any of us."

Meantime Madame Magloire had served up supper ; it consisted of soup made of water, oil, bread, and salt, a little pork, a scrap of mutton, a few figs, a green cheese, and a large loaf of rye bread. She had, without asking, added to the usual dinner of the Bishop a bottle of fine old Mauves wine.

The Bishop's countenance was lighted up with this expression of pleasure, peculiar to hospitable natures. "To supper !" he said briskly, as was his habit when he had a guest. He seated the man at his right. Mademoiselle Baptistine, perfectly quiet and natural, took her place at his left.

The Bishop said the blessing, and then served the soup himself, according to his usual custom. The man fell to, eating greedily.

Suddenly the Bishop said : "It seems to me something is lacking on the table."

The fact was, that Madame Magloire had set out only the three plates that were necessary. Now it was the custom of the house, when the Bishop had any one to supper, to set all six of the silver plates on the table, an innocent display. This graceful appearance of luxury was a sort of childlikeness which was full of charm in this gentle but austere household, which elevated poverty to dignity.

Madame Magloire understood the remark ; without a word she went out, and a moment afterwards the three plates, for which the Bishop had asked, were shining on the cloth, symmetrically arranged before each of three guests.

#### IV.

##### SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DAIRIES OF PONTARLIER.

Now, in order to give an idea of what passed at this table, we cannot do better than to transcribe here a passage in a letter from Mademoiselle Baptistine to Madame de Bois-

chevron, in which the conversation between the convict and the Bishop is related with charming minuteness.

\* \* \* \* \*

“This man paid no attention to any one. He ate with the voracity of a starving man. After supper, however, he said :

“‘Monsieur Curé, all this is too good for me, but I must say that the wagoners, who wouldn’t have me eat with them, live better than you.’

“Between us, the remark shocked me a little. My brother answered :

“‘They are more fatigued than I am.’

“‘No,’ responded this man ; ‘they have more money. You are poor, I can see. Perhaps you are not a curé even. Are you only a curé ? Ah ! if God is just, you well deserve to be a curé.’

“‘God is more than just,’ said my brother.

“A moment after he added

“‘Monsieur Jean Valjean, you are going to Pontarlier?’

“‘A compulsory journey.’

“I am pretty sure that is the expression the man used. Then he continued :

“‘I must be on the road to-morrow morning by day-break. It is a hard journey. If the nights are cold the days are warm.’

“‘You are going,’ said my brother, ‘to a fine country. During the Revolution, when my family was ruined, I took refuge at first in Franche-Comté, and supported myself there for some time by the labour of my hands. There I found plenty of work, and had only to make my choice. There are paper-mills, tanneries, distilleries, oil-factories, large clock-making establishments, steel manufactories, copper foundries, at least twenty iron foundries, four of which, at Lods, Châtillon, Audincourt, and Beure, are very large.’

“I think I am not mistaken, and that these are the

names that my brother mentioned. Then he broke off and addressed me :

“ ‘ Dear sister, have we not relatives in that part of the country?’ ”

“ I answered :

“ ‘ We had ; among others Monsieur Luncente, who was captain of the gates at Pontarlier under the old régime.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied my brother, “ but in ’93 no one had relatives ; every one depended upon his hands. I laboured. They have, in the region of Pontarlier, where you are going, Monsieur Valjean, a business which is quite patriarchal and very charming, sister. It is their dairies, which they call *fruittières*.’ ”

“ Then my brother, while helping this man at table, explained to him in detail what these *fruittières* were ;—that they were divided into two kinds: the *great barns*, belonging to the rich, and where there are forty or fifty cows, which produce from seven to eight thousand cheeses during the summer ; and the associated *fruittières*, which belong to the poor; these comprise the peasants inhabiting the mountains, who put their cows into a common herd, and divide the proceeds. They hire a cheese-maker, whom they call a *grurin* ; the *grurin* receives the milk of the associates three times a day, and notes the quantities in duplicate. Towards the end of April, the dairy work commences, and about the middle of June the cheese-makers drive their cows into the mountains.

“ The man became animated even while he was eating. My brother gave him some good Mauves wine, which he does not drink himself, because he says it is too dear. My brother gave him all these details with that easy gaiety which you know is peculiar to him, intermingling his words with compliments for me. He dwelt much upon the good condition of a *grurin*, as if he wished that this man should understand, without advising him directly, and abruptly,

that it would be an asylum for him. One thing struck me. This man was what I have told you. Well! my brother, during the supper, and during the entire evening, with the exception of a few words about Jesus, when he entered, did not say a word which could recall to this man who he himself was, nor indicate to him who my brother was. It was apparently a fine occasion to get in a little sermon, and to set up the bishop above the convict in order to make an impression upon his mind. It would, perhaps, have appeared to some to be a duty, having this unhappy man in hand, to feed the mind at the same time with the body, and to administer reproof, seasoned with morality and advice, or at least a little pity accompanied by an exhortation to conduct himself better in future. My brother asked him neither his country nor his history; for his crime lay in his history, and my brother seemed to avoid everything which could recall it to him. At one time, as my brother was speaking of the mountaineers of Pontarlier, who have *a pleasant labour near heaven, and who* he added, *are happy because they are innocent*, he stopped short, fearing there might have been in this word, which had escaped him, something which could wound the feelings of this man. Upon reflection, I think I understand what was passing in my brother's mind. He thought, doubtless, that this man, who called himself Jean Valjean, had his wretchedness too constantly before his mind; that it was best not to distress him by referring to it, and to make him think, if it were only for a moment, that he was a common person like any one else, by treating him thus in the ordinary way. Is not this really understanding charity? Is there not, dear madame, something truly evangelical in this delicacy, which abstains from sermonizing, moralizing, and making allusions, and is it not the wisest sympathy, when a man has a suffering point, not to touch upon it at all? It seems to me that this was my brother's inmost thought. At any

rate, all I can say is, if he had all these ideas, he did not show them even to me: he was, from beginning to end, the same as on other evenings, and he took supper with this Jean Valjean with the same air and manner that he would have supped with Monsieur Gédéon, the Provost, or with the Curé of the parish.

“ Towards the end, as we were at dessert, some one pushed the door open. It was mother Gerbaud with her child in her arms. My brother kissed the child, and borrowed fifteen *sous* that I had with me to give to mother Gerbaud. The man, during this time, paid but little attention to what passed. He did not speak, and appeared to be very tired. The poor old lady left, and my brother said grace, after which he turned towards this man and said: ‘ You must be in great need of sleep.’ Madame Magloire quickly removed the cloth. I understood that we ought to retire in order that this traveller might sleep, and we both went to our rooms. However, in a few moments afterwards, I sent Madame Magloire to put on the bed of this man a roebuck skin from the Black Forest, which is in my chamber. The nights are quite cold, and this skin retains the warmth. It is a pity that it is quite old, and all the hair is gone. My brother bought it when he was in Germany, at Totlingen, near the sources of the Danube, as also the little ivory-handled knife, which I use at table.

“ Madame Magloire came back immediately, we said our prayers in the parlour which we use as a drying-room, and then we retired to our chambers without saying a word.”

## V.

### TRANQUILLITY.

AFTER having said good-night to his sister, Monseigneur Bienvenu took one of the silver candlesticks from the table, handed the other to his guest, and said to him:

“Monsieur, I will show you to your room.”

The man followed him.

As may have been understood from what has been said before, the house was so arranged that one could reach the alcove in the oratory only by passing through the Bishop’s sleeping chamber. Just as they were passing through this room Madame Magloire was putting up the silver in the cupboard at the head of the bed. It was the last thing she did every night before going to bed.

The Bishop left his guest in the alcove, before a clean, white bed. The man set down the candlestick upon a small table.

“Come,” said the Bishop, “a good night’s rest to you: to-morrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk from our cows.”

“Thank you, Monsieur l’Abbé,” said the man.

Scarcely had he pronounced these words of peace, when suddenly he made a singular motion which would have chilled the two good women of the house with horror, had they witnessed it. Even now it is hard for us to understand what impulse he obeyed at that moment. Did he intend to give a warning or to throw out a menace? Or was he simply obeying a sort of instinctive impulse, obscure even to himself? He turned abruptly towards the old man, crossed his arms, and casting a wild look upon his host, exclaimed in a harsh voice :

“Ah, now, indeed! You lodge me in your house, as near you as that!”

He checked himself, and added, with a laugh, in which there was something horrible :

“Have you reflected upon it? Who tells you that I am not a murderer?”

The Bishop responded :

“God will take care of that.”

Then with gravity, moving his lips like one praying or

talking to himself, he raised two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who, however, did not bow; and without turning his head or looking behind him, went into his chamber.

When the alcove was occupied, a heavy serge curtain was drawn in the oratory, concealing the altar. Before this curtain the Bishop knelt as he passed out, and offered a short prayer.

A moment afterwards he was walking in the garden, surrendering mind and soul to a dreamy contemplation of these grand and mysterious works of God, which night makes visible to the eye.

As to the man, he was so completely exhausted that he did not even avail himself of the clean white sheets; he blew out the candle with his nostril, after the manner of convicts, and fell on the bed, dressed as he was, into a sound sleep.

Midnight struck as the Bishop came back to his chamber.

A few moments afterwards all in the little house slept.

## VI.

### JEAN VALJEAN.

TOWARDS the middle of the night, Jean Valjean awoke.

Jean Valjean was born of a poor peasant family of Brie. In his childhood he had not been taught to read: when he was grown up, he chose the occupation of a pruner at Faverolles. His mother's name was Jeanne Mathieus, his father's Jean Valjean or Vlajeans, probably a nickname, a contraction of *voilà Jean*.

Jean Valjean was of a thoughtful disposition, but not sad, which is characteristic of affectionate natures. Upon the whole, however, there was something torpid and insignificant, in the appearance at least, of John Valjean. He

had lost his parents when very young. His mother died of malpractice in a milk-fever: his father, a pruner before him, was killed by a fall from a tree. Jean Valjean now had but one relative left, his sister, a widow with seven children, girls and boys. This sister had brought up Jean Valjean, and, as long as her husband lived, she had taken care of her young brother. Her husband died, leaving the eldest of these children eight, the youngest one year old. Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year: he took the father's place, and, in his turn, supported the sister who reared him. This he did naturally, as a duty, and even with a sort of moroseness on his part. His youth was spent in rough and ill-recompensed labour: he never was known to have a sweetheart; he had not time to be in love.

At night he came in weary and ate his soup without saying a word. While he was eating, his sister, *Mére Jeanne*, frequently took from his porringer the best of his meal; a bit of meat, a slice of pork, the heart of the cabbage, to give to one of her children. He went on eating, his head bent down nearly into the soup, his long hair falling over his dish, hiding his eyes; he did not seem to notice anything that was done. At Faverolles, not far from the house of the Valjeans, there was on the other side of the road a farmer's wife named Marie Claude; the Valjean children, who were always nearly famished, sometimes went in their mother's name to borrow a pint of milk, which they would drink behind a hedge, or in some corner of the lane, snatching away the pitcher so greedily one from another, that the little girls would spill it upon their aprons and their necks; if their mother had known of this exploit she would have punished the delinquents severely. Jean Valjean, rough and grumbler as he was, paid Marie Claude; their mother never knew it, and so the children escaped.

He earned in the pruning season eighteen sous a day: after that he hired out as reaper, workman, teamster, or

labourer. He did whatever he could find to do. His sister worked also, but what could she do with seven little children? It was a sad group, which misery was grasping and closing upon, little by little. There was a very severe winter; Jean had no work, the family had no bread; literally no bread, and seven children.

One Sunday night, Maubert Isabeau, the baker on the Place de l'Eglise, in Faverolles, was just going to bed when he heard a violent blow against the barred window of his shop. He got down in time to see an arm thrust through the aperture made by the blow of a fist on the glass. The arm seized a loaf of bread and took it out. Isabeau rushed out; the thief used his legs valiantly; Isabeau pursued him and caught him. The thief had thrown away the bread, but his arm was still bleeding. It was Jean Valjean.

All that happened in 1795. Jean Valjean was brought before the tribunals of the time for “burglary at night, in an inhabited house.” He had a gun which he used as well as any marksman in the world, and was something of a poacher, which hurt him, there being a natural prejudice against poachers. The poacher, like the smuggler, approaches very nearly to the brigand. We must say, however, by the way, that there is yet a deep gulf between this race of men and the hideous assassin of the city. The poacher dwells in the forest, and the smuggler in the mountains or upon the sea; cities produce ferocious men, because they produce corrupt men; the mountains, the forest, and the sea, render men savage; they develop the fierce, but yet do not destroy the human.

Jean Valjean was found guilty: the terms of the code were explicit; in our civilization there are fearful hours: such are those when the criminal law pronounces shipwreck upon a man. What a mournful moment is that in which society withdraws itself and gives up a thinking being for ever. Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years in the galleys,

On the 22nd April, 1796, there was announced in Paris the victory of Montenotte, achieved by the Commanding-General of the army of Italy, whom the message of the Directory, to the Five Hundred, of the 2nd Floréal, year IV., called Buonaparte; that same day a great chain was riveted at the Bicêtre. Jean Valjean was a part of this chain. An old turnkey of the prison, now nearly ninety, well remembers this miserable man, who was ironed at the end of the fourth plinth in the north angle of the court. Sitting on the ground like the rest, he seemed to comprehend nothing of his position, except its horror: probably there was also mingled with the vague ideas of a poor ignorant man a notion that there was something excessive in the penalty. While they were with heavy hammer-strokes behind his head riveting the bolt of his iron collar, he was weeping. The tears choked his words, and he only succeeded in saying from time to time: "*I was a pruner at Faverolles.*" Then sobbing as he was, he raised his right hand and lowered it seven times, as if he was touching seven heads of unequal height, and at this gesture one could guess that whatever he had done, had been to feed and clothe seven little children.

He was taken to Toulon, at which place he arrived after a journey of twenty-seven days, on a cart, the chain still about his neck. At Toulon he was dressed in a red blouse, all his past life was effaced, even to his name. He was no longer Jean Valjean: he was Number 24,601. What became of the sister? What became of the seven children? Who troubled himself about that? What becomes of the handful of leaves of the young tree when it is sown at the trunk?

It is the old story. These poor little lives, these creatures of God, henceforth without support, or guide, or asylum; they passed away wherever chance led, who knows even? Each took a different path, it may be, and sank little by little into the chilling dark which engulfs solitary destinies;

that sullen gloom where are lost so many ill-fated souls in the sombre advance of the human race. They left that region; the church of what had been their village forgot them; the stile of what had been their field forgot them; after a few years in the galleys, even Jean Valjean forgot them. In that heart, in which there had been a wound, there was a scar, that was all. During the time he was at Toulon, he heard but once of his sister; that was, I think, at the end of the fourth year of his confinement. I do not know how the news reached him: some one who had known him at home had seen his sister. She was in Paris, living in a poor street near Saint Sulpice, the Rue du Geindre. She had with her but one child, the youngest, a little boy. Where were the other six? She did not know herself, perhaps. Every morning she went to a bindery, No. 3 Rue du Sabot, where she was employed as a folder and book-stitcher. She had to be there by six in the morning, long before the dawn in the winter. In the same building with the bindery there was a school, where she sent her little boy, seven years old. As the school did not open until seven, and she must be at her work at six, her boy had to wait in the yard an hour, until the school opened—an hour of cold and darkness in the winter. They would not let the child wait in the bindery, because he was troublesome, they said. The workmen, as they passed in the morning, saw the poor little fellow sometimes sitting on the pavement nodding with weariness, and often sleeping in the dark, crouched and bent over his basket. When it rained, an old woman, the portress, took pity on him; she let him come into her lodge, the furniture of which was only a pallet bed, a spinning-wheel, and two wooden chairs; and the little one slept there in a corner, hugging the cat to keep himself warm. At seven o'clock the school opened and he went in. That is what was told Jean Valjean. It was as if a window had suddenly been opened, looking upon the destiny of those

he had loved, and then all was closed again, and he heard nothing more for ever. Nothing more came to him; he had not seen them, never will he see them again! and through the remainder of this sad history we shall not meet them again.

Near the end of this fourth year, his chance of liberty came to Jean Valjean. His comrades helped him as they always do in that dreary place, and he escaped. He wandered two days in freedom through the fields ; if it is freedom to be hunted, to turn your head each moment, to tremble at the least noise, to be afraid of everything, of the smoke of a chimney, the passing of a man, the baying of a dog, the gallop of a horse, the striking of a clock, of the day because you see, and of the night because you do not ; of the road, of the path, the bush, of sleep. During the evening of the second day he was retaken ; he had neither eaten nor slept for thirty-six hours. The maritime tribunal extended his sentence three years for this attempt, which made eight. In the sixth year his turn of escape came again ; he tried it, but failed again. He did not answer at roll-call, and the alarm cannon was fired. At night the people of the vicinity discovered him hidden beneath the keel of a vessel on the stocks ; he resisted the galley-guard which seized him. Escape and resistance. This the provisions of the special code punished by an addition of five years, two with the double chain. Thirteen years. The tenth year his turn came round again ; he made another attempt with no better success. Three years for this new attempt. Sixteen years. And finally, I think it was in the thirteenth year, he made yet another, and was retaken after an absence of only four hours. Three years for these four hours. Nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was set at large : he had entered in 1796 for having broken a pane of glass, and taken a loaf of bread.

This is a place for a short parenthesis. This is the

second time, in his studies on the penal question and on the sentences of the law, that the author of this book has met with the theft of a loaf of bread as the starting-point of the ruin of a destiny. Claude Gueux stole a loaf of bread ; Jean Valjean stole a loaf of bread ; English statistics show that in London starvation is the immediate cause of four thefts out of five.

Jean Valjean entered the galleys sobbing and shuddering : he went out hardened ; he entered in despair : he went out sullen.

What had been the life of this soul ?

## VII.

### THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR.

LET us endeavour to tell.

It is an imperative necessity that society should look into these things ; they are its own work.

He was, as we have said, ignorant ; but he was not imbecile. The natural light was enkindled in him. Misfortune, which has also its illumination, added to the few rays that he had in his mind. Under the whip, under the chain, in the cell, in fatigue, under the burning sun of the galleys, upon the convict's bed of plank, he turned to his own conscience, and he reflected.

He constituted himself a tribunal.

He began by arraigning himself.

He recognized, that he was not an innocent man, unjustly punished. He acknowledged that he had committed an extreme and a blamable action ; that the loaf perhaps would not have been refused him, had he asked for it ; that at all events it would have been better to wait, either for pity, or for work ; that it is not altogether an unanswerable

reply to say : “ could I wait when I was hungry ? ” that, in the first place, it is very rare that any one dies of actual hunger ; and that, fortunately or unfortunately, man is so made that he can suffer long and much, morally and physically, without dying ; that he should, therefore, have had patience ; that that would have been better even for those poor little ones ; that it was an act of folly in him, poor, worthless man, to seize society in all its strength, forcibly by the collar, and imagine that he could escape from misery by theft ; that that was, at all events, a bad door for getting out of misery by which one entered into infamy ; in short, that he had done wrong.

Then he asked himself :

If he were the only one who had done wrong in the course of his fatal history ? If, in the first place, it were not a grievous thing that he, a workman, should have been in want of work ; that he, an industrious man, should have lacked bread. If, moreover, the fault having been committed and avowed, the punishment had not been savage and excessive. If there was not a greater abuse, on the part of the law, in the penalty, than there had been, on the part of the guilty, in the crime. If there were not an excess of weight in one of the scales of the balance—on the side of the expiation. If the discharge of the penalty were not the effacement of the crime ; and if the result were not to reverse the situation, to replace the wrong of the delinquent by the wrong of the repression, to make a victim of the guilty, and a creditor of the debtor, and actually to put the right on the side of him who had violated it. If that penalty, taken in connexion with its successive extensions for his attempts to escape, had not at last come to be a sort of outrage of the stronger on the weaker, a crime of society towards the individual, a crime which was committed afresh every day, a crime which had endured for nineteen years.

He questioned himself if human society could have the right alike to crush its members, in the one case by its unreasonable carelessness, and in the other by its pitiless care ; and to keep a poor man for ever between a lack and an excess, a lack of work, an excess of punishment.

If it were not outrageous that society should treat with such rigid precision those of its members who were most poorly endowed in the distribution of wealth that chance had made, and who were, therefore, most worthy of indulgence.

These questions asked and decided, he condemned society and sentenced it.

He sentenced it to his hatred.

He made it responsible for the doom which he had undergone, and promised himself that he, perhaps, would not hesitate some day to call it to an account. He declared to himself that there was no equity between the injury that he had committed and the injury that had been committed on him ; he concluded, in short, that his punishment was not, really, an injustice, but that beyond all doubt it was an iniquity.

Anger may be foolish and absurd, and one may be irritated when in the wrong ; but a man never feels outraged unless in some respect he is at bottom right. Jean Valjean felt outraged.

And then, human society had done him nothing but injury ; never had he seen anything of her, but this wrathful face which she calls justice, and which she shows to those whom she strikes down. No man had ever touched him but to bruise him. All his contact with men had been by blows. Never, since his infancy, since his mother, since his sister, never had he been greeted with a friendly word or a kind regard. Through suffering on suffering he came little by little to the conviction, that life was a war ; and that in that war he was the vanquished. He had no weapon

but his hate. He resolved to sharpen it in the galleys and to take it with him when he went out.

There was at Toulon a school for the prisoners conducted by some not very skilful friars, where the most essential branches were taught to such of these poor men as were willing. He was one of the willing ones. He went to school at forty and learned to read, write, and cipher. He felt that to increase his knowledge was to strengthen his hatred. Under certain circumstances, instruction and enlightenment may serve as rallying-points for evil.

It is sad to tell; but after having tried society, which had caused his misfortunes, he tried Providence which created society, and condemned it also.

Thus, during those nineteen years of torture and slavery, did this soul rise and fall at the same time. Light entered on the one side, and darkness on the other.

Jean Valjean was not, we have seen, of an evil nature. His heart was still right when he arrived at the galleys. While there he condemned society, and felt that he became wicked; he condemned Providence, and felt that he became impious.

It is difficult not to reflect for a moment here.

Can human nature be so entirely transformed from top to bottom? Can man, created good by God, be made wicked by man? Can the soul be changed to keep pace with its destiny, and become evil when its destiny is evil? Can the heart become distorted and contract deformities and infirmities that are incurable, under the pressure of a disproportionate woe, like the vertebral column under a too heavy brain? Is there not in every human soul; was there not in the particular soul of Jean Valjean, a primitive spark, a divine element, incorruptible in this world, immortal in the next, which can be developed by good, kindled, lit-up, and made resplendently radiant, and which evil can never entirely extinguish?

Grave and obscure questions, to the last of which every physiologist would probably, without hesitation, have answered *no*, had he seen at Toulon, during the hours of rest, which to Jean Valjean were hours of thought, this gloomy galley-slave, seated, with folded arms, upon the bar of some windlass, the end of his chain stuck into his pocket that it might not drag, serious, silent, and thoughtful, a pariah of the law which views man with wrath, condemned by civilization which views heaven with severity.

Certainly, we will not conceal it, such a physiologist would have seen in Jean Valjean an irremediable misery ; he would perhaps have lamented the disease occasioned by the law ; but he would not even have attempted a cure ; he would have turned from the sight of the caverns which he would have beheld in that soul ; and, like Dante at the gate of Hell, he would have wiped out from that existence the word which the finger of God has nevertheless written upon the brow of every man—*Hope !*

Was that state of mind which we have attempted to analyze as perfectly clear to Jean Valjean as we have tried to render it to our readers ? Did Jean Valjean distinctly see, after their formation, and had he distinctly seen, while they were forming, all the elements of which his moral misery was made up ? Had this rude and unlettered man taken accurate account of the succession of ideas by which he had, step by step, risen and fallen, till he had reached that mournful plane which for so many years already had marked the internal horizon of his mind ? Had he a clear consciousness of all that was passing within him, and of all that was moving him ? This we dare not affirm ; we do not, in fact, believe it. Jean Valjean was too ignorant, even after so much ill fortune, for nice discrimination in these matters. At times he did not even know exactly what were his feelings. Jean Valjean was in the dark ; he suffered in the dark ; he hated in the dark ; we might say that he hated

in his own sight. He lived constantly in this darkness, groping blindly and as in a dream. Only, at intervals, there broke over him suddenly, from within or from without, a shock of anger, an overflow of suffering, a quick pallid flash which lit up his whole soul, and showed all around him, before and behind, in the glare of a hideous light, the fearful precipices and the sombre prospectives of his fate.

The flash passed away ; the night fell, and where was he ? He no longer knew.

The peculiarity of punishment of this kind, in which what is pitiless, that is to say, what is brutalizing, predominates, is to transform little by little, by a slow stupefaction, a man into an animal, sometimes into a wild beast. Jean Valjean's repeated and obstinate attempts to escape are enough to prove that such is the strange effect of the law upon a human soul. Jean Valjean had renewed these attempts, so wholly useless and foolish, as often as an opportunity offered, without one moment's thought of the result, or of experience already undergone. He escaped wildly, like a wolf on seeing his cage door open. Instinct said to him : " Away ! " Reason said to him : " Away ! " But before a temptation so mighty, reason fled ; instinct alone remained. The beast alone was in play. When he was retaken, the new severities that were inflicted upon him only made him still more fierce.

We must not omit one circumstance, which is, that in physical strength he far surpassed all the other inmates of the prison. At hard work, at twisting a cable, or turning a windlass, Jean Valjean was equal to four men. He would sometimes lift and hold enormous weights on his back, and would occasionally act the part of what is called a *jack*, or what was called in old French an *orgeuil*, whence came the name, we may say by the way, of the Rue Montorgeuil near the Halles of Paris. His comrades had nicknamed him Jean the Jack. At one time, while the balcony of the City

Hall of Toulon was undergoing repairs, one of Puget's admirable caryatides, which support the balcony, slipped from its place and was about to fall, when Jean Valjean, who happened to be there, held it up on his shoulder till the workmen came.

His suppleness surpassed his strength. Certain convicts, always planning escape, have developed a veritable science of strength and skill combined,—the science of the muscles. A mysterious system of statics is practised throughout daily by prisoners, who are eternally envying the birds and flies. To scale a wall, and to find a foot-hold where you should hardly see a projection, was play for Jean Valjean. Given an angle in a wall, with the tension of his back and his knees, with elbows and hands braced against the rough face of the stone, he would ascend, as if by magic, to a third story. Sometimes he climbed up in this manner to the roof of the galleys.

He talked but little, and never laughed. Some extreme emotion was required to draw from him, once or twice a year, that lugubrious sound of the convict, which is like the echo of a demon's laugh. To those who saw him, he seemed to be absorbed in continually looking up something terrible.

He was absorbed, in fact.

Through the diseased perceptions of an incomplete nature and a smothered intelligence, he vaguely felt a monstrous weight was over him. In that pallid and sullen shadow in which he crawled, whenever he turned his head and endeavoured to raise his eyes, he saw, with mingled rage and terror, forming, massing, and mounting up out of view above him with horrid escarpments, a kind of frightful accumulation of things, of laws, of prejudices, of men, and of acts, the outlines of which escaped him, the weight of which appalled him, and which was no other than the prodigious pyramid which we call civilization. Here and there in that shapeless and crawling mass, sometimes near at hand, some-

times afar off, and upon inaccessible heights, he distinguished some group, some detail vividly clear, here the jailer with his staff, here the gendarme with his sword, yonder the mitred archbishop ; and on high, in a sort of blaze of glory, the emperor crowned and resplendent. It seemed to him that these distant splendours, far from dissipating his night, made it blacker and more deathly. All this, laws, prejudices, acts, men, things, went and came above him, according to the complicated and mysterious movement that God impresses upon civilization, marching over him and crushing him with an indescribably tranquil cruelty and inexorable indifference. Souls sunk to the bottom of possible misfortune, and unfortunate men lost in the lowest depths, where they are no longer seen, the rejected of the law, feel upon their heads the whole weight of that human society, so formidable to him who is without it, so terrible to him who is beneath it.

In such a situation Jean Valjean mused, and what could be the nature of his reflections ?

If a millet seed under a millstone had thoughts, doubtless it would think what Jean Valjean thought.

All these things, realities full of spectres, phantasmagoria full of realities, had at last produced within him a condition which was almost inexpressible.

Sometimes in the midst of his work in the galleys he would stop, and begin to think. His reason, more mature, and, at the same time, perturbed more than formerly, would revolt. All that had happened to him would appear absurd ; all that surrounded him would appear impossible. He would say to himself : "It is a dream." He would look at the jailer standing a few steps from him ; the jailer would seem to be a phantom ; all at once this phantom would give him a blow with a stick.

For him the external world had scarcely an existence. It would be almost true to say that for Jean Valjean there was no sun, no beautiful summer days, no radiant sky, no

fresh April dawn. Some dim window light was all that shone in his soul.

To sum up in conclusion, what can be summed up and reduced to positive results, of all that we have been showing, we will make sure only of this, that in the course of nineteen years, Jean Valjean, the inoffensive pruner of Faverolles, the terrible galley-slave of Toulon, had become capable, thanks to the training he had received in the galleys, of two species of crime ; first, a sudden, unpremeditated action, full of rashness, all instinct, a sort of reprisal for the wrong he had suffered ; secondly, a serious, premeditated act, discussed by his conscience, and pondered over with the false ideas which such a fate will give. His premeditations passed through the three successive phases to which natures of a certain stamp are limited—reason, will, and obstinacy. He had as motives, habitual indignation, bitterness of soul, a deep sense of injuries suffered, a reaction even against the good, the innocent, and the upright, if any such there are. The beginning as well as the end of all his thoughts was hatred of human law ; that hatred which, if it be not checked in its growth by some providential event, becomes, in a certain time, hatred of society, then hatred of the human race, and then hatred of creation, and reveals itself by a vague and incessant desire to injure some living being, it matters not who. So, the passport was right which described Jean Valjean as *a very dangerous man*.

From year to year this soul had withered more and more, slowly, but fatally. With his withered heart, he had a dry eye. When he left the galleys, he had not shed a tear for nineteen years.

## VIII.

### THE WATERS AND THE SHADOW.

A MAN overboard !

What matters it ! the ship does not stop. The wind is

blowing, that dark ship must keep on her destined course. She passes away.

The man disappears, then reappears, he plunges and rises again to the surface, he calls, he stretches out his hands, they hear him not; the ship, staggering under the gale, is straining every rope, the sailors and passengers see the drowning man no longer; his miserable head is but a point in the vastness of the billows.

He hurls cries of despair into the depths. What a spectre is that disappearing sail! He looks upon it, he looks upon it with frenzy. It moves away; it grows dim; it diminishes. He was there but just now, he was one of the crew, he went and came upon the deck with the rest, he had his share of the air and of the sunlight, he was a living man. Now, what has become of him? He slipped, he fell; and it is finished.

He is in the monstrous deep. He has nothing under his feet but the yielding, fleeing element. The waves, torn and scattered by the wind, close round him hideously; the rolling of the abyss bears him along; shreds of water are flying about his head; a populace of waves spit upon him; confused openings half swallow him; when he sinks he catches glimpses of yawning precipices full of darkness; fearful unknown vegetations seize upon him, bind his feet, and draw him to themselves; he feels that he is becoming the great deep; he makes part of the foam; the billows toss him from one to the other; he tastes the bitterness; the greedy ocean is eager to devour him; the monster plays with his agony. It seems as if all this were liquid hate.

But yet he struggles.

He tries to defend himself; he tries to sustain himself; he struggles; he swims. He—that poor strength that fails so soon—he combats the unfailing.

Where now is the ship? Far away yonder. Hardly visible in the pallid gloom of the horizon.

The wind blows in gusts ; the billows overwhelm him. He raises his eyes, but sees only the livid clouds. He, in his dying agony, makes part of this immense insanity of the sea. He is tortured to his death by its immeasurable madness. He hears sounds, which are strange to man, sounds which seem to come not from earth, but from some frightful realm beyond.

There are birds in the clouds, even as there are angels above human distresses, but what can they do for him ? They fly, sing, and float, while he is gasping.

He feels that he is buried at once by those two infinites, the ocean and the sky ; the one is a tomb, the other a pall.

Night descends, he has been swimming for hours, his strength is almost exhausted ; that ship, that far off thing, where there were men, is gone ; he is alone in the terrible gloom of the abyss ; he sinks, he strains, he struggles, he feels beneath him the shadowy monsters of the unseen ; he shouts.

Men are no more. Where is God ?

He shouts. Help ! help ! He shou s incessantly.

Nothing in the horizon. Nothing in the sky.

He implores the blue vault, the waves, the rocks ; all are deaf. He supplicates the tempest ; the imperturbable tempest obeys only the infinite.

Around him are darkness, storm, solitude, wild and unconscious tumult, the ceaseless tumbling of the fierce waters ; within him, horror and exhaustion. Beneath him the engulfing abyss. No resting-place. He thinks of the shadowy adventures of his lifeless body in the limitless gloom. The biting cold paralyzes him. His hands clutch spasmodically, and grasp at nothing. Winds, clouds, whirlwinds, blasts, stars, all useless ! What shall he do ? He yields to despair; worn out, he seeks death ; he no longer resists ; he gives himself up ; he abandons the contest, and he is rolled away into the dismal depths of the abyss for ever.

O implacable march of human society ! Destruction of men and of souls marking its path ! Ocean, where fall all that the law lets fall ! Ominous disappearance of aid ! O moral death ! The sea is the inexorable night into which the penal law casts its victims. The sea is the measureless misery.

The soul drifting in that sea may become a corpse. Who shall restore it to life ?

## IX.

### NEW GRIEFS.

WHEN the time for leaving the galleys came, and when there were sounded in the ear of Jean Valjean the strange words: *You are free!* the moment seemed improbable and unreal ; a ray of living light, a ray of the true light of living men, suddenly penetrated his soul. But this ray quickly faded away. Jean Valjean had been dazzled with the idea of liberty. He had believed in a new life. He soon saw what sort of liberty that is which has a yellow passport.

And along with that there were many bitter experiences. He had calculated that his savings, during his stay at the galleys, would amount to a hundred and seventy-one francs. It is proper to say that he had forgotten to take into account the compulsory rest on Sundays and holidays, which, in nineteen years, required a deduction of about twenty-four francs. However that might be, his savings had been reduced, by various local charges, to the sum of a hundred and nine francs and fifteen sous, which was counted out to him on his departure.

He understood nothing of this, and thought himself wronged, or to speak plainly, robbed.

The day after his liberation, he saw before the door of an orange flower distillery at Grasse, some men who were

unloading bags. He offered his services. They were in need of help and accepted them. He set at work. He was intelligent, robust, and handy ; he did his best ; the foreman appeared to be satisfied. While he was at work, a gendarme passed, noticed him, and asked for his papers. He was compelled to show the yellow passport. That done, Jean Valjean resumed his work. A little while before he had asked one of the labourers how much they were paid per day for this work, and the reply was, *thirty sous*. At night, as he was obliged to leave the town next morning, he went to the foreman of the distillery, and asked for his pay. The foreman did not say a word, but handed him fifteen sous. He remonstrated. The man replied "*that is good enough for you.*" He insisted. The foreman looked him in the eyes and said : "*Look out for the lock-up !*"

There again he thought himself robbed.

Society, the State, in reducing his savings, had robbed him by wholesale. Now it was the turn of the individual, who was robbing him by retail.

Liberation is not deliverance. A convict may leave the galleyes behind, but not his condemnation.

This was what befell him at Grasse. We have seen how he was received at D—.

## X.

### THE MAN AWAKES.

As the cathedral clock struck two, Jean Valjean awoke.

What awakened him was, too good a bed. For nearly twenty years he had not slept in a bed, and, although he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep.

He had slept something more than four hours. His fatigue had passed away. He was not accustomed to give many hours to repose.

He opened his eyes, and looked for a moment into the obscurity about him, then he closed them to go to sleep again.

When many diverse sensations have disturbed the day, when the mind is preoccupied, we can fall asleep once, but not a second time. Sleep comes at first much more readily than it comes again. Such was the case with Jean Valjean. He could not get to sleep again, and so he began to think.

He was in one of those moods in which the ideas we have in our minds are perturbed. There was a kind of vague ebb and flow in his brain. His oldest and his latest memories floated about pell mell, and crossed each other confusedly, losing their own shapes, swelling beyond measure, then disappearing all at once, as if in a muddy and troubled stream. Many thoughts came to him, but there was one which continually presented itself, and which drove away all others. What that thought was, we shall tell directly. He had noticed the six silver plates and the large ladle that Madame Magloire had put on the table.

Those six silver plates took possession of him. There they were, within a few steps. At the very moment that he passed through the middle room to reach the one he was now in, the old servant was placing them in a little cupboard at the head of the bed. He had marked that cupboard well: on the right, coming from the dining-room. They were solid; and old silver. With the big ladle, they would bring at least two hundred francs: double what he had got for nineteen years' labour. True: he would have got more if the “government” had not “robbed” him.

His mind wavered a whole hour, and a long one, in fluctuation and in struggle. The clock struck three. He opened his eyes, rose up hastily in bed, reached out his arm and felt his haversack, which he had put into the corner of the alcove, then he thrust out his legs and placed his feet on

the ground, and found himself, he knew not how, seated on his bed.

He remained for some time lost in thought in that attitude, which would have had a rather ominous look, had any one seen him there in the dusk—he only awake in the slumbering house. All at once he stooped down, took off his shoes, and put them softly upon the mat in front of the bed, then he resumed his thinking posture, and was still again.

In that hideous meditation, the ideas which we have been pointing out, troubled his brain without ceasing, entered, departed, returned, and became a sort of weight upon him ; and then he thought, too, he knew not why, and with that mechanical obstinacy that belongs to reverie, of a convict named Brevet, whom he had known in the galleys, and whose trowsers were only held up by a single knit cotton suspender. The checked pattern of that suspender came continually before his mind.

He continued in this situation, and would perhaps have remained there until daybreak, if the clock had not struck the quarter or the half-hour. The clock seemed to say to him : “Come along !”

He rose to his feet, hesitated for a moment longer, and listened ; all was still in the house ; he walked straight and cautiously towards the window, which he could discern. The night was not very dark ; there was a full moon, across which large clouds were driving before the wind. This produced alternations of light and shade, out-of-doors eclipses and illuminations, and in-doors a kind of glimmer. This glimmer, enough to enable him to find his way, changing with the passing clouds, resembled that sort of livid light, which falls through the window of a dungeon before which men are passing and repassing. On reaching the window, Jean Valjean examined it. It had no bars, opened into the garden, and was fastened, according to the fashion of the country, with a little wedge only. He opened it ; but as

he cold keen air rushed into the room, he closed it again immediately. He looked into the garden with that absorbed look which studies rather than sees. The garden was enclosed with a white wall, quite low, and readily scaled. Beyond, against the sky, he distinguished the tops of trees at equal distances apart, which showed that this wall separated the garden from an avenue or a lane planted with trees.

When he had taken this observation, he turned like a man whose mind is made up, went to his alcove, took hisaversack, opened it, fumbled in it, took out something which he laid upon the bed, put his shoes into one of his pockets, tied up his bundle, swung it on his shoulders, put on his cap, and pulled the vizor down over his eyes, felt for his stick, and went and put it in the corner of the window, then returned to the bed, and resolutely took up the object which he had laid on it. It looked like a short iron bar, pointed at one end like a spear.

It would have been hard to distinguish in the darkness or what use this piece of iron had been made. Could it be lever? Could it be a club?

In the day-time, it would have been seen to be nothing but a miner's drill. At that time, the convicts were sometimes employed in quarrying stone on the high hills that surround Toulon, and they often had miners' tools in their possession. Miners' drills are of solid iron, terminating at the lower end in a point, by means of which they are sunk into the rock.

He took the drill in his right hand, and holding his breath, with stealthy steps, he moved towards the door of the next room which was the Bishop's as we know. On reaching the door, he found it unlatched. The Bishop had not closed it.

## XI.

## WHAT HE DOES.

JEAN VALJEAN listened. Not a sound.

He pushed the door.

He pushed it lightly with the end of his finger, with the stealthy and timorous carefulness of a cat. The door yielded to the pressure with a silent imperceptible movement, which made the opening a little wider.

He waited a moment, and then pushed the door again more boldly.

It yielded gradually and silently. The opening was now wide enough for him to pass through ; but there was a small table near the door which with it formed a troublesome angle, and which barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean saw the obstacle. At all hazards the opening must be made still wider.

He so determined, and pushed the door a third time, harder than before. This time a rusty hinge suddenly sent out into the darkness a harsh and prolonged creak.

Jean Valjean shivered. The noise of this hinge sounded in his ears as clear and terrible as the trumpet of the Judgment Day.

In the fantastic exaggeration of the first moment, he almost imagined that this hinge had become animate, and suddenly endowed with a terrible life ; and that it was barking like a dog to warn everybody, and rouse the sleepers.

He stopped, shuddering and distracted, and dropped from his tiptoes to his feet. He felt the pulses of his temples beat like trip-hammers, and it appeared to him that his

breath came from his chest with the roar of wind from a avern. It seemed impossible that the horrible sound of his incensed hinge had not shaken the whole house with the shock of an earthquake : the door pushed by him had aken the alarm, and had called out ; the old man would rise ; the two old women would scream ; help would come ; in a quarter of an hour the town would be alive with it, and the gendarmes in pursuit. For a moment he thought he was lost.

He stood still, petrified like the pillar of salt, not daring to stir. Some minutes passed. The door was wide open : he ventured a look into the room. Nothing had moved. He listened. Nothing was stirring in the house. The noise of the rusty hinge had wakened nobody.

This first danger was over, but still he felt within him a rightful tumult. Nevertheless he did not flinch. Not even when he thought he was lost had he flinched. His only hought was to make an end of it quickly. He took one step and was in the room.

A deep calm filled the chamber. Here and there indistinct, confused forms could be distinguished ; which by lay were papers scattered over a table, opened folios, books piled on a stool, an arm-chair with clothes on it, a *prie-Dieu*, but now were only dark corners and whitish spots. Jean Valjean advanced, carefully avoiding the furniture. At the further end of the room he could hear the equal and quiet breathing of the sleeping Bishop.

Suddenly he stopped : he was near the bed, he had reached it sooner than he thought.

Nature sometimes joins her effects and her appearances to our acts with a sort of serious and intelligent appropriateness, as if she would compel us to reflect. For nearly a half-hour a great cloud had darkened the sky. At the moment when Jean Valjean paused before the bed the cloud broke as if purposely, and a ray of moonlight crossing the

high window, suddenly lighted up the Bishop's pale face. He slept tranquilly. He was almost entirely dressed, though in bed, on account of the cold nights of the lower Alps, with a dark woollen garment which covered his arms to the wrist. His head had fallen on the pillow in the unstudied attitude of slumber; over the side of the bed hung his hand, ornamented with the pastoral ring, and which had done so many good deeds, so many pious acts. His entire countenance was lit up with a vague expression of content, hope, and happiness. It was more than a smile, and almost a radiance. On his forehead rested the indescribable reflection of an unseen light. The souls of the upright in sleep have vision of a mysterious heaven.

A reflection from this heaven shone upon the Bishop.

But it was also a luminous transparency, for this heaven was within him; this heaven was his conscience.

At the instant when the moonbeam overlay, so to speak, this inward radiance, the sleeping Bishop appeared as if in a halo. But it was very mild, and veiled in an ineffable twilight. The moon in the sky, nature drowsing, the garden without a pulse, the quiet house, the hour, the moment, the silence, added something strangely solemn and unutterable to the venerable repose of this man, and enveloped his white locks and his closed eyes with a serene and majestic glory, this face where all was hope and confidence—this old man's head and infant's slumber.

There was something of divinity almost in this man, thus unconsciously august.

Jean Valjean was in the shadow with the iron drill in his hand, erect, motionless, terrified at this radiant figure. He had never seen anything comparable to it. This confidence filled him with fear. The moral world has no greater spectacle than this; a troubled and restless conscience on the verge of committing an evil deed, contemplating the sleep of a good man.

This sleep in this solitude, with a neighbour such as he, contained a touch of the sublime, which he felt vaguely but powerfully.

None could have told what was within him, not even himself. To attempt to realize it, the utmost violence must be imagined in the presence of the most extreme mildness. In his face nothing could be distinguished with certainty. It was a sort of haggard astonishment. He saw it; that was all. But what were his thoughts? It would have been impossible to guess. It was clear that he was moved and agitated. But of what nature was this emotion?

He did not remove his eyes from the old man. The only thing which was plain from his attitude and his countenance was a strange indecision. You would have said he was hesitating between two realms, that of the doomed and that of the saved. He appeared ready to cleave this skull, or to kiss this hand.

In a few moments he raised his left hand slowly to his forehead and took off his hat; then, letting his hand fall with the same slowness, Jean Valjean resumed his contemplations, his cap in his left hand, his club in his right, and his hair bristling on his fierce-looking head.

Under this frightful gaze the Bishop still slept in profoundest peace.

The crucifix above the mantelpiece was dimly visible in the moonlight, apparently extending its hands towards both, with a benediction for one and a pardon for the other.

Suddenly Jean Valjean put on his cap, then passed quickly, without looking at the Bishop, along the bed, straight to the cupboard which he perceived near its head; raised the drill to force the lock: the key was in it; he opened it; the first thing he saw was the basket of silver, he took it, crossed the room with hasty stride, careless of the noise, reached the door, entered the oratory, took his stick, stepped out, put the silver in his knapsack, threw

away the basket, ran across the garden, leaped over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

## XII.

### THE BISHOP AT WORK.

THE next day at sunrise, Monseigneur Bienvenu was walking in the garden. Madame Magloire ran towards him quite beside herself.

“Monseigneur, Monseigneur,” cried she, “does your greatness know where the silver basket is?”

“Yes,” said the Bishop.

“God be praised!” said she, “I did not know what had become of it.”

The Bishop had just found the basket on a flower-bed. He gave it to Madame Magloire and said: “There it is.”

“Yes,” said she, “but there is nothing in it. The silver?”

“Ah,” said the Bishop, “it is the silver then that troubles you. I do not know where that is.”

“Good heavens! it is stolen. That man who came last night stole it.”

And in the twinkling of an eye, with all the agility of which her age was capable, Madame Magloire ran to the oratory, went into the alcove, and came back to the Bishop. The Bishop was bending with some sadness over a cochlearia des Guillons which the basket had broken in falling. He looked up at Madame Magloire’s cry:

“Monseigneur, the man has gone! the silver is stolen!”

While she was uttering this exclamation her eyes fell on an angle of the garden where she saw traces of an escalade. A capstone of the wall had been thrown down.

“See, there is where he got out; he jumped into Cochefilet lane. The abominable fellow, he has stolen our silver!”

The Bishop was silent for a moment, then raising his serious eyes, he said mildly to Madame Magloire :

“ Now first, did this silver belong to us ? ”

Madame Magloire did not answer ; after a moment the Bishop continued :

“ Madame Magloire : I have for a long time wrongfully withheld this silver ; it belonged to the poor. Who was this man ? A poor man evidently.”

“ Alas ! Alas ! ” returned Madame Magloire. “ It is not on my account or Mademoiselle’s ; it is all the same to us. But it is on yours, Monseigneur. What is Monseigneur going to eat from now ? ”

The Bishop looked at her with amazement :

“ How so ! have we no tin plates ? ”

Madame Magloire shrugged her shoulders.

“ Tin smells.”

“ Well, then, iron plates.”

Madame Magloire made an expressive gesture.

“ Iron tastes.”

“ Well,” said the Bishop, “ then, wooden plates.”

In a few minutes he was breakfasting at the same table at which Jean Valjean sat the night before. While breakfasting, Monseigneur Bienvenu pleasantly remarked to his sister who said nothing, and Madame Magloire who was grumbling to herself, that there was really no need even of a wooden spoon or fork to dip a piece of bread into a cup of milk.

“ Was there ever such an idea ? ” said Madame Magloire to herself, as she went backwards and forwards : “ to take in a man like that, and to give him a bed beside him ; and yet what a blessing it was that he did nothing but steal ! Oh, my stars ! it makes the chills run over me when I think of it ! ”

Just as the brother and sister were rising from the table, there was a knock at the door.

“ Come in,” said the Bishop.

The door opened. A strange, fierce group appeared on the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth by the collar. The three men were gendarmes ; the fourth Jean Valjean.

A brigadier of gendarmes, who appeared to head the group, was near the door. He advanced towards the Bishop, giving a military salute.

“Monseigneur,” said he—

At this word, Jean Valjean, who was sullen and seemed entirely cast-down, raised his head with a stupefied air—

“Monseigneur !” he murmured, “then it is not the curé !”

“Silence !” said a gendarme, “it is Monseigneur, the Bishop.”

In the meantime Monsieur Bienvenu had approached as quickly as his great age permitted.

“Ah, there you are !” said he, looking towards Jean Valjean, “I am glad to see you. But ! I gave you the candlesticks also, which are silver like the rest. Why did you not take them along with your plates ?”

Jean Valjean opened his eyes and looked at the Bishop with an expression which no human tongue could describe.

“Monseigneur,” said the Brigadier, “then what this man said was true ? We met him. He was going like a man who was running away, and we arrested him in order to see. He had this silver.”

“And he told you,” interrupted the Bishop, with a smile, “that it had been given him by a good old priest with whom he had passed the night. I see it all. And you brought him back here ? It is all a mistake.”

“If that is so,” said the Brigadier, “we can let him go.”

“Certainly,” replied the Bishop.

The gendarmes released Jean Valjean, who shrank back—

“Is it true that they let me go ?” he said in a voice almost inarticulate, as if he were speaking in his sleep.

“Yes ! you can go. Do you not understand ?” said a gendarme.

"My friend," said the Bishop, "before you go away, here are your candlesticks; take them."

He went to the mantelpiece, took the two candlesticks, and brought them to Jean Valjean. The two women beheld the action without a word, or gesture, or look, that might disturb the Bishop.

Jean Valjean was trembling in every limb. He took the two candlesticks mechanically, and with a wild appearance.

"Now," said the Bishop, "go in peace. By the way, my friend, when you come again, you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door. It is closed only with a latch, day or night."

Then turning to the gendarmes, he said:

"Messieurs, you can retire." The gendarmes withdrew.

Jean Valjean felt like a man who is just about to faint.

The Bishop approached him, and said, in a low voice:

"Forget not, never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of this promise, stood confounded. The Bishop had laid much stress upon these words as he uttered them. He continued, solemnly:

"Jean Valjean, my brother: you belong no longer to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!"

### XIII.

#### LITTLE GERVAIS.

JEAN VALJEAN went out of the city as if he were escaping. He made all haste to get into the open country, taking the first lanes and by-paths that offered, without noticing that he was every moment retracing his steps. He wandered thus all the morning. He had eaten nothing, but he felt

no hunger. He was the prey of a multitude of new sensations. He felt somewhat angry, he knew not against whom. He could not have told whether he was touched or humiliated. There came over him, at times, a strange relenting which he struggled with, and to which he opposed the hardening of his past twenty years. This condition wearied him. He saw, with disquietude, shaken within him that species of frightful calm which the injustice of his fate had given him. He asked himself what should replace it. At times he would really have liked better to be in prison with the gendarmes, and that things had not happened thus; that would have given him less agitation. Although the season was well advanced, there were yet here and there a few late flowers in the hedges, the odour of which, as it met him in his walk, recalled the memories of his childhood. These memories were almost insupportable, it was so long since they had occurred to him.

Unspeakable thoughts thus gathered in his mind the whole day.

As the sun was sinking towards the horizon, lengthening the shadow on the ground of the smallest pebble, Jean Valjean was seated behind a thicket in a large reddish plain, an absolute desert. There was no horizon but the Alps. Not even the steeple of a village church. Jean Valjean might have been three leagues from D—. A by-path which crossed the plain, passed a few steps from the thicket.

In the midst of this meditation, which would have heightened not a little the frightful effect of his rags to any one who might have met him, he heard a joyous sound.

He turned his head, and saw coming along the path a little Savoyard, a dozen years old, singing, with his hurdy-gurdy at his side, and his marmot box on his back.

One of those pleasant and gay youngsters who go from place to place, with their knees sticking through their trowsers.

Always singing, the boy stopped from time to time, and played at tossing up some pieces of money that he had in his hand, probably his whole fortune. Among them there was one forty-sous piece.

The boy stopped by the side of the thicket without seeing Jean Valjean, and tossed up his handful of sous ; until this time he had skilfully caught the whole of them upon the back of his hand.

This time the forty-sous piece escaped him, and rolled towards the thicket, near Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean put his foot upon it.

The boy, however, had followed the piece with his eye, and had seen where it went.

He was not frightened, and walked straight to the man.

It was an entirely solitary place. Far as the eye could reach, there was no one on the plain or in the path. Nothing could be heard, but the faint cries of a flock of birds of passage, that were flying across the sky at an immense height. The child turned his back to the sun, which made his hair like threads of gold, and flushed the savage face of Jean Valjean with a lurid glow.

“ Monsieur,” said the little Savoyard, with that childish confidence which is made up of ignorance and innocence, “ my piece ? ”

“ What is your name ? ” said Jean Valjean.

“ Little Gervais, Monsieur.”

“ Get out,” said Jean Valjean.

“ Monsieur,” continued the boy, “ give me my piece.”

Jean Valjean dropped his head and did not answer.

The child began again :

“ My piece, Monsieur ! ”

Jean Valjean’s eye remained fixed on the ground.

“ My piece ! ” exclaimed the boy, “ my white piece ! my silver ! ”

Jean Valjean did not appear to understand. The boy

took him by the collar of his blouse and shook him. And at the same time he made an effort to move the big, iron-soled shoe which was placed upon his treasure.

“I want my piece ! my forty-sous piece !”

The child began to cry. Jean Valjean raised his head. He still kept his seat. His look was troubled. He looked upon the boy with an air of wonder, then reached out his hand towards his stick, and exclaimed in a terrible voice : “Who is there ?”

“Me, monsieur,” answered the boy. “Little Gervais ! me ! me ! give me my forty sous, if you please ! Take away your foot, monsieur, if you please !” Then becoming angry, small as he was, and almost threatening :

“Come, now, will you take away your foot ? Why don’t you take away your foot ?”

“Ah ! you here yet !” said Jean Valjean, and rising hastily to his feet, without releasing the piece of money, he added : “You’d better take care of yourself !”

The boy looked at him in terror, then began to tremble from head to foot, and after a few seconds of stupor, took to flight and ran with all his might, without daring to turn his head, or to utter a cry.

At a little distance, however, he stopped for want of breath, and Jean Valjean, in his reverie, heard him sobbing.

In a few minutes the boy was gone.

The sun had gone down.

The shadows were deepening around Jean Valjean. He had not eaten during the day ; probably he had some fever.

He had remained standing, and had not changed his attitude since the child fled. His breathing was at long and unequal intervals. His eyes were fixed on a spot ten or twelve steps before him, and seemed to be studying with profound attention the form of an old piece of blue crockery that was lying in the grass. All at once he shivered ; he began to feel the cold night air

He pulled his cap down over his forehead, sought mechanically to fold and button his blouse around him, stepped forward and stooped to pick up his stick.

At that instant he perceived the forty-sous piece which his foot had half buried in the ground, and which glistened among the pebbles. It was like an electric shock. "What is that?" said he, between his teeth. He drew back a step or two, then stopped, without the power to withdraw his gaze from this point which his foot had covered the instant before, as if the thing that glistened there in the obscurity had been an open eye fixed upon him.

After a few minutes, he sprang convulsively towards the piece of money, seized it, and, rising, looked away over the plain, straining his eyes towards all points of the horizon, standing and trembling like a frightened deer which is seeking a place of refuge.

He saw nothing. Night was falling, the plain was cold and bare, thick purple mists were rising in the glimmering twilight.

He said: "Oh!" and began to walk rapidly in the direction in which the child had gone. After some thirty steps, he stopped, looked about, and saw nothing.

Then he called with all his might "Little Gervais! Little Gervais!"

And then he listened.

There was no answer.

The country was desolate and gloomy. On all sides was space. There was nothing about him but a shadow in which his gaze was lost, and a silence in which his voice was lost.

A biting norther was blowing, which gave a kind of dismal life to everything about him. The bushes shook their little thin arms with an incredible fury. One would have said that they were threatening and pursuing somebody.

He began to walk again, then quickened his pace to a

run, and from time to time stopped and called out in that solitude, in a most desolate and terrible voice :

“ Little Gervais ! Little Gervais !”

Surely, if the child had heard him, he would have been frightened, and would have hid himself. But doubtless the boy was already far away.

He met a priest on horseback. He went up to him and said :

“ Monsieur curé, have you seen a child go by ?”

“ No,” said the priest.

“ Little Gervais was his name ?”

“ I have seen nobody.”

He took two five-franc pieces from his bag, and gave them to the priest.

“ Monsieur curé, this is for your poor. Monsieur curé, he is a little fellow, about ten years old, with a marmot, I think, and a hurdygurdy. He went this way. One of these Savoyards, you know ?”

“ I have not seen him.”

“ Little Gervais ? is his village near here ? can you tell me ?”

“ If it be as you say, my friend, the little fellow is a foreigner. They roam about this country. Nobody knows them.”

Jean Valjean hastily took out two more five-franc pieces, and gave them to the priest.

“ For your poor,” said he.

Then he added wildly :

“ Monsieur abbé, have me arrested. I am a robber.”

The priest put spurs to his horse, and fled in great fear.

Jean Valjean began to run again in the direction which he had first taken.

He went on in this wise for a considerable distance, looking around, calling and shouting, but met nobody else.

Two or three times he left the path to look at what

seemed to be somebody lying down or crouching ; it was only low bushes or rocks. Finally, at a place where three paths met, he stopped. The moon had risen. He strained his eyes in the distance, and called out once more : " Little Gervais ! Little Gervais ! Little Gervais !" His cries died away in the mist, without even awakening an echo. Again he murmured : " Little Gervais !" but with a feeble, and almost inarticulate voice. That was his last effort ; his knees suddenly bent under him, as if an invisible power overwhelmed him at a blow, with the weight of his bad conscience ; he fell exhausted upon a great stone, his hands clenched in his hair, and his face on his knees, and exclaimed : " What a wretch I am ! "

Then his heart swelled, and he burst into tears. It was the first time he had wept for nineteen years.

When Jean Valjean left the Bishop's house, as we have seen, his mood was one that he had never known before. He could understand nothing of what was passing within him. He set himself stubbornly in opposition to the angelic deeds and the gentle words of the old man, " you have promised me to become an honest man. I am purchasing your soul, I withdraw it from the spirit of perversity, and I give it to God Almighty." This came back to him incessantly. To this celestial tenderness, he opposed pride, which is the fortress of evil in man. He felt dimly, that the pardon of this priest was the hardest assault, and the most formidable attack which he had yet sustained ; that his hardness of heart would be complete, if it resisted this kindness ; that if he yielded, he must renounce that hatred with which the acts of other men had for so many years filled his soul, and in which he found satisfaction ; that, this time, he must conquer or be conquered, and that the struggle, a gigantic and decisive struggle, had begun between his own wickedness, and the goodness of this man.

In view of all these things, he moved like a drunken man.

While thus walking on with haggard look, had he a distinct perception of what might be to him the result of his adventure at D——? Did he hear those mysterious murmurs which warn or entreat the spirit at certain moments of life? Did a voice whisper in his ear that he had just passed through the decisive hour of his destiny, that there was no longer a middle course for him, that if, thereafter, he should not be the best of men, he would be the worst, that he must now, so to speak, mount higher than the Bishop, or fall lower than the galley slave; that, if he would become good, he must become an angel; that, if he would remain wicked, he must become a monster?

Here we must again ask those questions, which we have already proposed elsewhere: was some confused shadow of all this formed in his mind? Certainly, misfortune, we have said, draws out the intelligence: it is doubtful, however, if Jean Valjean was in a condition to discern all that we here point out. If these ideas occurred to him, he but caught a glimpse, he did not see; and the only effect was to throw him into an inexpressible and distressing confusion. Being just out of that misshapen and gloomy thing which is called the galley, the Bishop had hurt his soul, as a too vivid light would have hurt his eyes on coming out of the dark. The future life, the possible life that was offered to him thenceforth, all pure and radiant, filled him with trembling and anxiety. He no longer knew really where he was. Like an owl who should see the sun suddenly rise, the convict had been dazzled and blinded by virtue.

One thing was certain, nor did he himself doubt it, that he was no longer the same man, that all was changed in him, that it was no longer in his power to prevent the Bishop from having talked to him and having touched him.

In this frame of mind, he had met Little Gervais, and stolen his forty sous. Why? He could not have explained it surely; was it the final effect, the final effort of the

evil thoughts he had brought from the galleys, a remnant of impulse, a result of what is called in physics *acquired force?* It was that, and it was also perhaps even less than that. We will say plainly, it was not he who had stolen, it was not the man, it was the beast which, from habit and instinct, had stupidly set its foot upon that money, while the intellect was struggling in the midst of so many new and unknown influences. When the intellect awoke and saw this act of the brute, Jean Valjean recoiled in anguish and uttered a cry of horror.

It was a strange phenomenon, possible only in the condition in which he then was, but the fact is, that in stealing this money from that child, he had done a thing of which he was no longer capable.

However that may be, this last misdeed had a decisive effect upon him ; it rushed across the chaos of his intellect and dissipated it, set the light on one side and the dark clouds on the other, and acted upon his soul, in the condition it was in, as certain chemical re-agents act upon a turbid mixture, by precipitating one element and producing a clear solution of the other.

At first, even before self-examination and reflection, distractedly, like one who seeks to escape, he endeavoured to find the boy to give him back his money ; then, when he found that that was useless and impossible, he stopped in despair. At the very moment when he exclaimed : “What a wretch I am !” he saw himself as he was, and was already so far separated from himself that it seemed to him that he was only a phantom, and that he had there before him, in flesh and bone, with his stick in his hand, his blouse on his back, his knapsack filled with stolen articles on his shoulders, with his stern and gloomy face, and his thoughts full of abominable projects, the hideous galley slave, Jean Valjean.

Excess of misfortune, we have remarked, had made him,

in some sort, a visionary. This, then, was like a vision. He veritably saw this Jean Valjean, this ominous face, before him. He was on the point of asking himself who that man was, and he was horror-stricken by it.

His brain was in one of those violent, and yet frightfully calm, conditions where reverie is so profound that it swallows up reality. We no longer see the objects that are before us, but we see as if outside of ourselves, the forms that we have in our minds.

He beheld himself then, so to speak, face to face, and at the same time, across that hallucination, he saw, at a mysterious distance, a sort of light which he took at first to be a torch. Examining more attentively this light which dawned upon his conscience, he recognized that it had a human form, and that this torch was the Bishop.

His conscience weighed in turn these two men thus placed before it, the Bishop and Jean Valjean. Anything less than the first would have failed to soften the second. By one of those singular efforts which are peculiar to this kind of ecstacy, as his reverie continued, the Bishop grew grander and more resplendent in his eyes; Jean Valjean shrank and faded away. At one moment he was but a shadow. Suddenly he disappeared. The Bishop alone remained.

He filled the whole soul of this wretched man with a magnificent radiance.

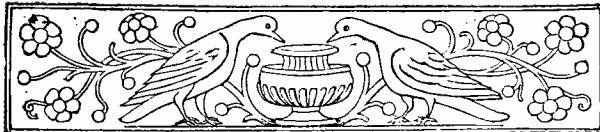
Jean Valjean wept long. He shed hot tears, he wept bitterly, with more weakness than a woman, with more terror than a child.

While he wept, the light grew brighter and brighter in his mind—an extraordinary light, a light at once transporting and terrible. His past life, his first offence, his long expiation, his brutal exterior, his hardened interior, his release made glad by so many schemes of vengeance, what had happened to him at the Bishop's, his last action, his theft of

forty sous from a child, a crime the meaner and the more monstrous that it came after the Bishop's pardon, all this returned and appeared to him, clearly, but in a light that he had never seen before. He beheld his life, and it seemed to him horrible ; his soul, and it seemed to him frightful. There was, however, a softened light upon that life and upon that soul. It seemed to him that he was looking upon Satan by the light of Paradise.

How long did he weep thus ? What did he do after weeping ? Where did he go ? Nobody ever knew. It is known simply that, on that very night, the stage-driver who drove at that time on the Grenoble route, and arrived at D—— about three o'clock in the morning, saw, as he passed through the Bishop's street, a man in the attitude of prayer, kneeling upon the pavement in the shadow, before the door of Monseigneur Bienvenu.





## Book Third

IN THE YEAR 1817

### I.

THE YEAR 1817.

THE year 1817 was that which Louis XVIII., with a certain royal assumption not devoid of stateliness, styled the twenty-second year of his reign. It was the year when M. Bruguière de Sorsum was famous. All the hair-dressers' shops, hoping for the return of powder and birds of Paradise, were bedizened with azure and fleurs-de-lis. It was the honest time when Count Lynch sat every Sunday as churchwarden on the official bench at Saint German des Prés, in the dress of a Peer of France, with his red ribbon and long nose, and that majesty of profile peculiar to a man who has done a brilliant deed. The brilliant deed committed by M. Lynch was that, being mayor of Bordeaux on the 12th of March, 1814, he had surrendered the city a little too soon to the Duke of Angoulême. Hence his peerage. In 1817 it was the fashion to swallow up little boys from four to six years old in great morocco caps with ears, strongly resembling the chimney-pots of the Esquimaux.

The French army was dressed in white after the Austrian style; regiments were called legions, and wore, instead of numbers, the names of the departments. Napoleon was at St. Helena, and as England would not give him green cloth, had had his old coats turned. In 1817, Pellegrini sang: Mademoiselle Bigottini danced; Potier reigned; Odry was not yet in existence. Madame Saqui succeeded to Forioso. There were Prussians still in France. M. Delalot was a personage. Legitimacy had just asserted itself by cutting off the fist and then the head of Pleignier, Carboneau, and Tollerion. Prince Talleyrand, the grand chamberlain, and Abbé Louis, the designated minister of the finances, looked each other in the face, laughing like two augurs; both had celebrated the mass of the Federation in the Champ-de-Mars on the 14th of July, 1790; Talleyrand had said it as bishop, Louis had served him as deacon. In 1817, in the cross-walks of this same Champ-de-Mars, were seen huge wooden cylinders, painted blue, with traces of eagles and bees, that had lost their gilding, lying in the rain, and rotting in the grass. These were the columns which, two years before, had supported the estrade of the Emperor in the Champ-de-Mai. They were blackened here and there from the bivouac-fires of the Austrians in barracks near the Gros-Caillou. Two or three of these columns had disappeared in the fires of these bivouacs, and had warmed the huge hands of the kaiserlics. The Champ-de-Mai was remarkable from the fact of having been held in the month of June, and on the Champ-de-Mars. In the year 1817, two things were popular—Voltaire-Touquet and Chartist snuff-boxes. The latest Parisian sensation was the crime of Dautun, who had thrown his brother's head into the fountain of the Marché-aux-Fleurs. People were beginning to find fault with the minister of the navy for having no news of that fated frigate, *La Méduse*, which was to cover Chaumareix with shame, and Géricault with glory. Colonel Selves went to Egypt, there

to become Soliman-Pacha. The Palace of the Thermes, Rue de La Harpe, was turned into a cooper's shop. On the platform of the octagonal tower of the hotel de Cluny, the little board shed was still to be seen, which had served as observatory to Messier, the astronomer of the navy under Louis XVI. The Duchess of Duras read to three or four friends, in her boudoir, furnished in sky-blue satin, the manuscript of *Ourika*. The N's were erased from the Louvre. The bridge of Austerlitz abdicated its name, and became the bridge of the Jardin-du-Roi, an enigma which disguised at once the bridge of Austerlitz and the Jardin-des-Plantes. Louis XVIII., absently annotating Horace with his fingernail while thinking about heroes that had become emperors, and shoe-makers that had become dauphins, had two cares, Napoleon and Mathurin Bruneau. The French Academy gave as a prize theme, *The happiness which Study procures*. M. Bellart was eloquent, officially. In his shadow was seen taking root the future Attorney-General, de Broë, promised to the sarcasms of Paul Louis Courier. There was a counterfeit Chauteaubriand called Marchangy, as there was to be later a counterfeit Marchangy called d'Arlincourt. *Claire d'Albe* and *Malek Adel* were masterpieces; Madame Cottin was declared the first writer of the age. The Institute struck from its list the academician, Napoleon Bonaparte. A royal ordinance established a naval school at Angoulême, for the Duke of Angoulême being Grand Admiral, it was evident that the town of Angoulême had by right all the qualities of a sea-port, without which the monarchical principle would have been assailed. The question whether the pictures, representing acrobats, which spiced the placards of Franconi, and drew together the blackguards of the streets, should be tolerated, was agitated in the Cabinet Councils. M. Paër, the author of *L'Agnese*, an honest man with square jaws and a wart on his cheek, directed the small, select concerts of the Marchioness de Sassenaye, Rue de la Ville-l'Evêque

All the young girls sang *l'Ermite de Saint Avelle*, words by Edmond Géraud. The *Nain jaune* was transformed into the *Miroir*. The Café Lemblin stood out for the emperor in opposition to the Café Valois, which was in favour of the Bourbons. A marriage had just been made up with a Sicilian princess, for the Duke of Berry, who was already in reality regarded with suspicion by Louvel. Madame de Staël had been dead a year. Mademoiselle Mars was hissed by the body-guards. The great journals were all small. The form was limited, but the liberty was large. *Le Constitutionnel* was constitutional; *La Minerve* called Chateaubriand, *Chateaubriand*. This excited great laughter among the citizens at the expense of the great writer.

It purchased journals, prostituted journalists insulted the outlaws of 1815; David no longer had talent, Arnault no longer had ability, Carnot no longer had probity, Soult had never gained a victory; it is true that Napoleon no longer had genius. Everybody knows that letters sent through the post to an exile rarely reach their destination, the police making it a religious duty to intercept them. This fact is by no means a new one; Descartes complained of it in his banishment. Now, David having shown some feeling in a Belgian journal at not receiving the letters addressed to him, this seemed ludicrous to the royalist papers, who seized the occasion to ridicule the exile. To say, *regicides* instead of *voters*, *enemies* instead of *allies*, *Napoleon* instead of *Buonaparte*, separated two men more than an abyss. All people of common sense agreed that the era of revolutions had been for ever closed by King Louis XVIII., surnamed "The immortal author of the Charter." At the terreprain of the Pont Neuf, the word *Redivivus* was sculptured on the pedestal which awaited the statue of Henri IV. M. Piet at Rue Thérèse, No. 4, was sketching the plan of his cabal to consolidate the monarchy. The leaders of the Right said, in grave dilemmas, "We must write to Bacol." Messrs.

Canuel O'Mahony and Chappedelaine made a beginning, not altogether without the approbation of Monsieur, of what was afterwards to become the “conspiracy of the Bord de l'Eau.” L'Epingle Noire plotted on its side; Delaverderie held interviews with Trogoff; M. Decazes, a mind in some degree liberal, prevailed. Chateaubriand, standing every morning at his window in the Rue Saint Dominique, No. 27, in stocking pantaloons and slippers, his grey hair covered with a Madras handkerchief, a mirror before his eyes, and a complete case of dental instruments open before him, cleaned his teeth, which were excellent, while dictating *La Monarchie selon la Charte* to M. Pilorge, his secretary. The critics in authority preferred Lafon to Talma. M. de Féletz signed himself A.; M. Hoffman signed himself Z. Charles Nodier was writing *Thérèse Aubert*. Divorce was abolished. The Lyceums called themselves colleges. The students, decorated on the collar with a golden fleur-de-lis, pommelled each other over the King of Rome. The secret police of the palace denounced to her royal highness, Madame, the portrait of the Duke of Orleans, which was everywhere to be seen, and which looked better in the uniform of colonel-general of hussars than the Duke of Berry in the uniform of colonel-general of dragoons—a serious matter. The city of Paris regilded the dome of the Invalides at its expense. Grave citizens asked each other what M. de Trinquelague would do in such or such a case; M. Clausel de Montals differed on sundry points from M. Clausel de Coussergues; M. de Salaberry was not satisfied. Comedy-writer Picard, of the Academy to which comedy-writer Molière could not belong, had *Les deux Philiberts* played at the Odeon, on the pediment of which, the removal of the letters still permitted the inscription to be read distinctly: THEATRE DE L'IMPÉTRICE. People took sides for or against Cugnet de Montarlot. Fabvier was factious; Bavoux was revolutionary. The bookseller Pelicier published an edition of Voltaire

under the title, *Works of Voltaire*, of the French Academy. "That will attract buyers," said the naive publisher. The general opinion was that M. Charles Loyson would be the genius of the age; envy was beginning to nibble at him, a sign of glory, and the line was made on him—

"Même quand Loyson vole, on sent qu'il a des pattes."

Cardinal Fesch refusing to resign, Monsieur de Pins, Archbishop of Amasie, administered the diocese of Lyons. The quarrel of the Vallée des Dappes commenced between France and Switzerland by a memorial from Captain, afterwards General Dufour. Saint-Simon, unknown, was building up his sublime dream. There was a celebrated Fourier in the Academy of Sciences whom posterity has forgotten, and an obscure Fourier in some unknown garret whom the future will remember. Lord Byron was beginning to dawn; a note to a poem of Millevoye introduced him to France as *a certain Lord Baron*. David d'Angers was endeavouring to knead marble. The Abbé Caron spoke with praise, in a small party of Seminarists in the cul-de-sac of the Feuillantines, of an unknown priest, Félicité Robert by name, who was afterwards Lamennais. A thing which smoked and clacked on the Seine, making the noise of a swimming dog, went and came beneath the windows of the Tuileries, from the Pont Royal to the Pont Louis XV.; it was a piece of mechanism of no great value, a sort of toy, the day-dream of a visionary inventor, a Utopia—a Steamboat. The Parisians looked upon the useless thing with indifference. Monsieur Vaublanc, wholesale reformer of the Institute by royal ordinance and distinguished author of several academicians, after having made them, could not make himself one. The Faubourg Saint-Germain and the Pavillon Marsan desired Monsieur Delaveau for prefect of police, on account of his piety. Dupuytren and Récamier quarrelled in the amphitheatre of the Ecole de Médecine,

and shook their fists in each other's faces, over the divinity of Christ. Cuvier, with one eye on the Book of Genesis and the other on nature, was endeavouring to please the bigoted reaction by reconciling fossils with texts and making the mastodons support Moses. Monsieur François de Neufchâteau, the praiseworthy cultivator of the memory of Parmentier, was making earnest efforts to have *pomme de terre* pronounced *parmentière*, without success. Abbé Grégoire, ex-bishop, ex-member of the National Convention, and ex-senator, had passed to the condition of the “infamous Grégoire,” in royalist polemics. The expression which we have just employed, “passed to the condition,” was denounced as a néologism by Monsieur Royer Collard. The new stone could still be distinguished by its whiteness under the third arch of the bridge of Jena, which, two years before, had been used to stop up the entrance of the mine bored by Blucher to blow up the bridge. Justice summoned to her bar a man who had said aloud, on seeing count d'Artois entering Notre-Dame, “Sapristi ! I regret the time when I saw Bonaparte and Talma entering the Bal-Sauvage, arm in arm.” Seditious language. Six months’ imprisonment.

Traitors showed themselves stripped even of hypocrisy ; men who had gone over to the enemy on the eve of a battle made no concealment of their bribes, and shamelessly walked abroad in daylight in the cynicism of wealth and dignities ; deserters of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, in the brazenness of their purchased shame, exposed the nakedness of their devotion to monarchy, forgetting the commonest requirements of public decency.

Such was the confused mass of events that floated pell-mell on the surface of the year 1817, and is now forgotten. History neglects almost all these peculiarities, nor can it do otherwise ; it is under the dominion of infinity. Nevertheless, these details, which are wrongly called little—there are

neither little facts in humanity nor little leaves in vegetation —are useful. The physiognomy of the years makes up the face of the century.

In this year, 1817, four young Parisians played “a good farce.”

These Parisians were, one from Toulouse, another from Limoges, the third from Cahors, and the fourth from Montauban ; but they were students, and to say student is to say Parisian ; to study in Paris is to be born in Paris.

These young men were remarkable for nothing ; everybody has seen such persons ; the four first comers will serve as samples ; neither good nor bad, neither learned nor ignorant, neither talented nor stupid ; handsome in that charming April of life which we call twenty. They were four Oscars ; for at this time, Arthurs were not yet in existence. *Burn the perfumes of Arabia in his honour*, exclaims the romance. *Oscar approaches ! Oscar, I am about to see him !* Ossian was in fashion, elegance was Scandinavian and Caledonian ; the pure English did not prevail till later, and the first of the Arthurs, Wellington, had but just won the victory of Waterloo.

The first of these Oscars was called Félix Tholomyès, of Toulouse ; the second, Listolier, of Cahors ; the third, Fameuil, of Limoges ; and the last, Blacheville, of Montauban. Of course, each had his mistress. Blacheville loved Favourite, so called, because she had been in England ; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken the name of a flower as her *nom de guerre* ; Fameuil idolized Zéphine, the diminutive of Josephine, and Tholomyès had Fantine, called the *Blond*, on account of her beautiful hair, the colour of the sun. Favourite, Dahlia, Zéphine, and Fantine were four enchanting girls, perfumed and sparkling ; something of workwomen still, since they had not wholly given up the needle, agitated by love-affairs, yet preserving on their countenances a remnant of the serenity of labour, and in their souls that flower of purity, which in woman survives the first

fall. One of the four was called the child, because she was the youngest ; and another was called the old one—the Old One was twenty-three. To conceal nothing, the three first were more experienced, more careless, and better versed in the ways of the world than Fantine, the Blond, who was still in her first illusion.

Dahlia, Zéphine, and Favourite especially, could not say as much. There had been already more than one episode in their scarcely commenced romance, and the lover called Adolphe in the first chapter, was found as Alphonse in the second, and Gustave in the third. Poverty and coquetry are fatal counsellors ; the one grumbles, the other flatters, and the beautiful daughters of the people have both whispering in their ear, each on its side. Their ill-guarded souls listen. Thence their fall, and the stones that are cast at them. They are overwhelmed with the splendour of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas ! was the Jungfrau ever hungry ?

Favourite, having been in England, was the admiration of Zéphine and Dahlia. She had had at a very early age a home of her own. Her father was a brutal, boasting old professor of Mathematics, never married, and a rake, despite his years. When young, he one day saw the dress of a chambermaid catch in the fender, and fell in love through the accident. Favourite was the result. Occasionally she met her father, who touched his hat to her. One morning, an old woman with a pious air entered her rooms, and asked, “ You do not know me, mademoiselle ? ”—“ No.”—“ I am your mother.” The old woman directly opened the buffet, ate and drank her fill, sent for a bed that she had, and made herself at home. This mother was a devotee and a grumbler ; she never spoke to Favourite, remained for hours without uttering a word, breakfasted, dined and supped for four, and went down to the porter’s lodge to see visitors and talk ill of her daughter.

What had attracted Dahlia to Listolier, to others perhaps, to indolence, was her beautiful, rosy finger-nails. How could such nails work! She who will remain virtuous must have no compassion for her hands. As to Zéphine, she had conquered Fameuil by her rebellious yet caressing little way of saying, “yes, sir.”

The young men were comrades, the young girls were friends. Such loves are always accompanied by such friendships.

Wisdom and philosophy are two things; a proof of which is that, with all necessary reservations for these little, irregular households, Favourite, Zéphine, and Dahlia, were philosophic, and Fantine was wise.

“Wise!” you will say, and Tholomyès? Solomon would answer that love is a part of wisdom. We content ourselves with saying that the love of Fantine was a first, an only, a faithful love.

She was the only one of the four who had been petted by but one.

Fantine was one of those beings which are brought forth from the heart of the people. Sprung from the most unfathomable depths of social darkness, she bore on her brow the mark of the anonymous and unknown. She was born at M—— on M——. Who were her parents? None could tell, she had never known either father or mother. She was called Fantine—why so? because she had never been known by any other name. At the time of her birth, the Directory was still in existence. She could have no family name, for she had no family; she could have no baptismal name, for then there was no church. She was named after the pleasure of the first passer-by who found her, a mere infant, straying barefoot in the streets. She received a name as she received the water from the clouds on her head when it rained. She was called little Fantine. Nobody knew anything more of her. Such was the manner

in which this human being had come into life. At the age of ten, Fantine left the city and went to service among the farmers of the suburbs. At fifteen, she came to Paris, to "seek her fortune." Fantine was beautiful and remained pure as long as she could. She was a pretty blonde with fine teeth. She had gold and pearls for her dowry; but the gold was on her head and the pearls in her mouth.

She worked to live; then, also to live, for the heart too has its hunger, she loved.

She loved Tholomyès.

To him, it was an amour; to her, a passion. The streets of the Latin Quarter, which swarm with students and grisesettes, saw the beginning of this dream. Fantine, in those labyrinths of the hill of the Pantheon, where so many ties are knotted and unloosed, long fled from Tholomyès, but in such a way as always to meet him again. There is a way of avoiding a person which resembles a search. In short, the eclogue took place.

Blacheville, Listolien, and Fameuil formed a sort of group of which Tholomyès was the head. He was the wit of the company.

Tholomyès was an old student of the old style; he was rich, having an income of four thousand francs—a splendid scandal on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève. He was a good liver thirty years old, and ill preserved. He was wrinkled, his teeth were broken, and he was beginning to show signs of baldness, of which he said gaily: "*The head at thirty, the knees at forty.*" His digestion was not good, and he had a weeping eye. But in proportion as his youth died out, his gaiety increased; he replaced his teeth by jests, his hair by joy, his health by irony, and his weeping eye was always laughing. He was dilapidated, but covered with flowers. His youth, decamping long before its time, was beating a retreat in good order, bursting with laughter, and displaying no loss of fire. He had had a piece refused

at the Vaudeville ; he made verses now and then on any subject ; moreover, he doubted everything with an air of superiority—a great power in the eyes of the weak. So, being bald and ironical, he was the chief. Can the word *iron* be the root from which irony is derived ?

One day, Tholomyès took the other three aside, and said to them with an oracular gesture :

“ For nearly a year, Fantine, Dahlia, Zéphine, and Favourite have been asking us to give them a surprise ; we have solemnly promised them one. They are constantly reminding us of it, me especially. Just as the old women at Naples cry to Saint January, ‘ *Faccia gialluta, fa o miracolo*, yellow face, do your miracle,’ our pretty ones are always saying : ‘ Tholomyès, when are you going to be delivered of your surprise ? ’ At the same time our parents are writing for us. Two birds with one stone. It seems to me the time has come. Let us talk it over.”

Upon this, Tholomyès lowered his voice, and mysteriously articulated something so ludicrous that a prolonged and enthusiastic giggling arose from the four throats at once, and Blacheville exclaimed : “ What an idea ! ”

An ale-house, filled with smoke, was before them ; they entered, and the rest of their conference was lost in its shade.

The result of this mystery was a brilliant pleasure party, which took place on the following Sunday, the four young men inviting the four young girls.

## II.

### FOUR TO FOUR.

IT is difficult to picture to one’s self, at this day, a country party of students and grisettes as it was forty-five years ago. Paris has no longer the same environs ; the aspect of what

we might call circum-Parisian life has completely changed in half a century; in place of the rude one-horse chaise, we have now the railroad car; in place of the pinnace, we have now the steamboat; we say Fécamp to-day, as we then said Saint Cloud. The Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its suburbs.

The four couples scrupulously accomplished all the country follies then possible. It was in the begininng of the holidays, and a warm, clear summer's day. The night before, Favourite, the only one who knew how to write, had written to Tholomyès in the name of the four: "It is lucky to go out early." For this reason, they rose at five in the morning. Then they went to Saint Cloud by the coach, looked at the dry cascade and exclaimed: "How beautiful it must be when there is any water!" breakfasted at the *Tête Noire*, which Castaing had not yet passed, amused themselves with a game of rings at the quincunx of the great basin, ascended to Diogenes' lantern, played roulette with macaroons on the Sèvres bridge, gathered bouquets at Puteaux, bought reed pipes at Neuilly, ate apple puffs everywhere, and were perfectly happy.

The young girls rattled and chattered like uncaged warblers. They were delirious with joy. Now and then they would playfully box the ears of the young men. Intoxication of the morning of life! Adorable years! The wing of the dragon-fly trembles! Oh, ye, whoever you may be, have you memories of the past? Have you walked in the brushwood, thrusting aside the branches for the charming head behind you? Have you glided laughingly down some slope wet with rain, with the woman of your love, who held you back by the hand, exclaiming: "Oh, my new boots! what a condition they are in!"

Let us hasten to say that that joyous annoyance, a shower, was wanting to this good-natured company, although Favourite had said, on setting out, with a magisterial and

maternal air, “The snails are crawling in the paths. A sign of rain, children.”

All four were ravishingly beautiful. A good old classic poet, then in renown, a good man who had an Eléanore, the Chevalier de Labouïsse, who was walking that day under the chestnut trees of Saint Cloud, saw them pass about ten o’clock in the morning, and exclaimed, thinking of the Graces : “There is one too many !” Favourite, the friend of Blacheville, the Old One of twenty-three, ran forward under the broad green branches, leaped across ditches, madly sprang over bushes, and took the lead in the gaiety with the verve of a young faun. Zéphine and Dahlia, whom chance had endowed with a kind of beauty that was heightened and perfected by contrast, kept together through the instinct of coquetry still more than through friendship, and, leaning on each other, affected English attitudes ; the first *keepsakes* had just appeared, melancholy was in vogue for women, as Byronism was afterwards for men, and the locks of the tender sex were beginning to fall dishevelled. Zéphine and Dahlia wore their hair in rolls. Listolier and Fameuil, engaged in a discussion on their professors, explaining to Fantine the difference between M. Delvincourt and M. Blondeau.

Blacheville seemed to have been created expressly to carry Favourite’s dead-leaf coloured shawl upon his arm on Sunday.

Tholomyès followed, ruling, presiding over the group. He was excessively gay, but one felt the governing power in him. There was dictatorship in his joviality ; his principal adornment was a pair of nankeen pantaloons, cut in the elephant-leg fashion, with under stockings of copper-coloured braid ; he had a huge rattan, worth two hundred francs, in his hand, and as he denied himself nothing, a strange thing called cigar in his mouth. Nothing being sacred to him, he was smoking.

"This Tholomyès is astonishing," said the others, with veneration. "What trousers! what energy!"

As to Fantine, she was joy itself. Her splendid teeth had evidently been endowed by Nature with one function—that of laughing. She carried in her hand rather than on her head, her little straw hat, with long, white strings. Her thick blond tresses, inclined to wave, and easily escaping from their confinement, obliging her to fasten them continually, seemed designed for the flight of Galatea under the willows. Her rosy lips babbled with enchantment. The corners of her mouth, turned up voluptuously like the antique masks of Erigone, seemed to encourage audacity; but her long, shadowy eyelashes were cast discreetly down towards the lower part of her face, as if to check its festive tendencies. Her whole toilette was indescribably harmonious and enchanting. She wore a dress of mauve barege, little reddish-brown buskins, the strings of which were crossed over her fine, white, open-worked stockings, and that species of spencer, invented at Marseilles, the name of which signifies fine weather, warmth, and noon. The three others, less timid as we have said, wore low-necked dresses, which in summer, beneath bonnets, covered with flowers, are full of grace and allurement; but by the side of this darling toilette, the canezhou of the blond Fantine, with its transparencies, indiscretions, and concealments, at once hiding and disclosing, seemed a provoking godsend of decency; and the famous court of love, presided over by the Viscountess de Cette, with the sea-green eyes, would probably have given the prize for coquetry to this canezhou, which had entered the lists for that of modesty. The simplest is sometimes the wisest. So things go.

A brilliant face, delicate profile, eyes of a deep blue, heavy eyelashes, small, arching feet, the wrists and ankles neatly encased, the white skin showing here and there the azure arborescence of the veins; a cheek small and fresh, a

neck robust as that of Egean Juno, the nape firm and supple, shoulders modelled as if by Coustou, with a voluptuous dimple in the centre, just visible through the muslin ; a gaiety tempered with reverie, sculptured and exquisite—such was Fantine, and you divined beneath this dress and these ribbons a statue, and in this statue a soul.

Fantine was beautiful, without being too conscious of it. Those rare dreamers, the mysterious priests of the beautiful, who silently compare all things with perfection, would have had a dim vision in this little work-woman, through the transparency of Parisian grace, of the ancient sacred Euphony. This daughter of obscurity had race. She possessed both types of beauty—style and rhythm. Style is the force of the ideal, rhythm is its movement.

We have said that Fantine was joy ; Fantine was also modesty.

For an observer who had studied her attentively would have found through all this intoxication of age, of season, and of love, an unconquerable expression of reserve and modesty. She was somewhat restrained. This chaste restraint is the shade which separates Psyche from Venus. Fantine had the long, white, slender fingers of the vestals that stir the ashes of the sacred fire with a golden rod. Although she would have refused nothing to Tholomyès, as might be seen but too well, her face, in repose, was in the highest degree maidenly ; a kind of serious and almost austere dignity suddenly possessed it at times, and nothing could be more strange or disquieting than to see gaiety vanish there so quickly, and reflection instantly succeed to delight. This sudden seriousness, sometimes strangely marked, resembled the disdain of a goddess. Her forehead, nose, and chin presented that equilibrium of line, quite distinct from the equilibrium of proportion which produces harmony of features ; in the characteristic interval which separates the base of the nose from the upper lip,

she had that almost imperceptible but charming fold, the mysterious sign of chastity, which enamoured Barbarossa with a Diana, found in the excavations of Iconium.

Love is a sin ; be it so. Fantine was innocence, floating upon the surface of this sin.

### III.

#### THOLOMYÈS IS SO MERRY THAT HE SINGS A SPANISH SONG.

THAT day was sunshine from one end to the other. All nature seemed to be out on a holiday. The parterres of Saint Cloud were balmy with perfumes ; the breeze from the Seine gently waved the leaves ; the boughs were gesticulating in the wind ; the bees were pillaging the jessamine ; a whole crew of butterflies had settled in the milfoil, clover, and wild oats. The august park of the King of France was invaded by a swarm of vagabonds, the birds.

The four joyous couples shone resplendently in concert with the sunshine, the flowers, the fields, and the trees.

And in this paradisaical community, speaking, singing, running, dancing, chasing butterflies, gathering bindweed, wetting their open-worked stockings in the high grass, fresh, wild, but not wicked, stealing kisses from each other indiscriminately now and then, all except Fantine, who was shut up in her vague, dreary, severe resistance, and who was in love. “ You always have the air of being out of sorts,” said Favourite to her.

These are true pleasures. These passages in the lives of happy couples are a profound appeal to life and nature, and call forth endearment and light from everything. There was once upon a time a fairy, who created meadows and trees expressly for lovers. Hence comes that eternal school

among the groves for lovers, which is always opening, and which will last so long as there are thickets and pupils. Hence comes the popularity of spring among thinkers. The patrician and the knife-grinder, the duke and peer, and the peasant, the men of the court, and the men of the town, as was said in olden times, all are subjects of this fairy. They laugh, they seek each other, the air seems filled with a new brightness ; what a transfiguration it is to love ! Notary clerks are gods. And the little shrieks, the pursuits among the grass, the waists encircled by stealth, that jargon which is melody, that adoration which breaks forth in a syllable, those cherries snatched from one pair of lips by another—all kindle up, and become transformed into celestial glories. Beautiful girls lavish their charms with sweet prodigality. We fancy that it will never end. Philosophers, poets, painters behold these ecstacies, and know not what to make of them. So dazzling are they. The departure for Cythera ! exclaims Watteau ; Lancret, the painter of the commonalty, contemplates his bourgeois soaring in the sky ; Diderot stretches out his arms to all these loves ; and d'Urfé associates them with the Druids.

After breakfast, the four couples went to see, in what was then called the king's square, a plant newly arrived from the Indies, the name of which escapes us at present, and which at this time was attracting all Paris to Saint Cloud : it was a strange and beautiful shrub with a long stalk, the innumerable branches of which, fine as threads, tangled, and leafless, were covered with millions of little, white blossoms, which gave it the appearance of flowing hair, powdered with flowers. There was always a crowd admiring it.

When they had viewed the shrub, Tholomyès exclaimed, “I propose donkeys,” and making a bargain with a donkey-driver, they returned through Vanvres and Issy. At Issy, they had an adventure. The park, Bien-National, owned

at this time by the commissary Bourguin, was by sheer good luck open. They passed through the grating, visited the mannikin anchorite in his grotto, and tried the little, mysterious effects of the famous cabinet of mirrors—a wanton trap, worthy of a satyr become a millionaire, or Turcaret metamorphosed into Priapus. They swung stoutly in the great swing, attached to the two chestnut trees, celebrated by the Abbé de Bernis. While swinging the girls, one after the other, and making folds of flying crinoline that Greuze would have found worth his study, the Toulousian Tholomyès, who was something of a Spaniard—Toulouse is cousin to Tolosa—sang in a melancholy key, the old *gallega* song, probably inspired by some beautiful damsel swinging in the air between two trees.

*Soy de Badajoz.  
Amor me llama.  
Toda mi alma  
Es en mis ojos  
Porque enseñas  
A tus pirenas.*

Fantine alone refused to swing.

“I do not like this sort of airs,” murmured Favourite, rather sharply.

They left the donkeys for a new pleasure, crossed the Seine in a boat, and walked from Passy to the Barrière de l’Etoile. They had been on their feet, it will be remembered, since five in the morning, but *bab!* there is no weariness on Sunday, said Favourite; on Sunday fatigue has a holiday. Towards three o’clock, the four couples, wild with happiness, were running down to the Russian mountains, a singular edifice which then occupied the heights of Beaujon, and the serpentine line of which might have been perceived above the trees of the Champs-Elysées.

From time to time Favourite exclaimed :

“But the surprise? I want the surprise.”

“Be patient,” answered Tholomyès.

## IV.

## AT BOMBARDA'S.

THE Russian mountains exhausted, they thought of dinner, and the happy eight, a little weary at last, stranded on Bombarda's, a branch establishment, set up in the Champs Elysées by the celebrated restaurateur, Bombarda, whose sign was then seen on the Rue de Rivoli, near the Delorme arcade.

A large but plain apartment, with an alcove containing a bed at the bottom (the place was so full on Sunday that it was necessary to take up with this lodging-room) ; two windows from which they could see, through the elms, the quai and the river ; a magnificent August sunbeam glancing over the windows ; two tables, one loaded with a triumphant mountain of bouquets, interspersed with hats and bonnets ; while at the other, the four couples were gathered round a joyous pile of plates, napkins, glasses, and bottles ; jugs of beer and flasks of wine ; little order on the table, and some disorder under it.

Says Molière :

“ Ils faisaient sous la table,  
Un bruit, un trique-trac épouvantable.”\*

Here was where the pastoral, commenced at five o'clock in the morning, was to be found at half-past four in the afternoon. The sun was declining, and their appetite with it.

The Champs Elysées, full of sunshine and people, was nothing but glare and dust, the two elements of glory. The horses of Marly, those neighing marbles, were curveting in a golden cloud. Carriages were coming and going. A magnificent squadron of body-guards, with the trumpet at

\* And under the table they beat  
A fearful tattoo with their feet.

their head, were coming down the avenue of Neuilly ; the white flag, faintly tinged with red by the setting sun, was floating over the dome of the Tuileries. The Place de la Concorde, then become Place Louis XV again, was overflowing with pleased promenaders. Many wore the silver fleur-de-lis suspended from the watered white ribbon which, in 1817, had not wholly disappeared from the button-holes. Here and there in the midst of groups of applauding spectators, circles of little girls gave to the winds a Bourbon doggerel rhyme, intended to overwhelm the Hundred Days, and the chorus of which ran :

Rendez-nous notre père de Gand,  
Rendez-nous notre père.\*

Crowds of the inhabitants of the faubourgs in their Sunday clothes, sometimes even decked with fleurs-de-lis like the citizens, were scattered over the great square and the square Marigny, playing games and going around on wooden horses ; others were drinking ; a few, printer apprentices, had on paper caps ; their laughter resounded through the air. Everything was radiant. It was a time of undoubted peace and profound royal security ; it was the time when a private and special report of Prefect of Police Anglès to the king on the faubourgs of Paris, ended with these lines : "Everything considered, sire, there is nothing to fear from these people. They are as careless and indolent as cats. The lower people of the provinces are restless, those of Paris are not so. They are all small men, sire, and it would take two of them, one upon the other, to make one of your grenadiers. There is nothing at all to fear on the side of the populace of the capital. It is remarkable that this part of the population has also decreased in stature during the last fifty years ; and the

Give us back our *Père de Gand*,  
Give us back our sire.

people of the faubourgs of Paris are smaller than before the Revolution. They are not dangerous. In short, they are good canaille."

That a cat may become changed into a lion, prefects of police do not believe possible ; nevertheless, it may be, and this is the miracle of the people of Paris. Besides, the cat, so despised by the Count Anglès, had the esteem of the republics of antiquity ; it was the incarnation of liberty in their sight, and, as if to serve as a pendant to the wingless Minerva of the Piræus, there was, in the public square at Corinth, the bronze colossus of a cat. The simple police of the Restoration looked too hopefully on the People of Paris. They are by no means such good canaille as is believed. The Parisian is among Frenchmen what the Athenian was among Greeks. Nobody sleeps better than he, nobody is more frankly frivolous and idle than he, nobody seems to forget things more easily than he ; but do not trust him, notwithstanding ; he is apt at all sorts of nonchalance, but when there is glory to be gained, he is wonderful in every species of fury. Give him a pike, and he will play the tenth of August ; give him a musket, and you shall have an Austerlitz. He is the support of Napoleon, and the resource of Danton. Is France in question ? he enlists ; is liberty in question ? he tears up the pavement. Beware ! his hair rising with rage is epic ; his blouse drapes itself into a chlamys about him. Take care ! At the first corner, Grenétat will make a Caudine Forks. When the tocsin sounds, this dweller in the faubourgs will grow ; this little man will arise, his look will be terrible, his breath will become a tempest, and a blast will go forth from his poor, frail breast that might shake the wrinkles out of the Alps. Thanks to the men of the Paris faubourgs, the Revolution infused into armies, conquers Europe. He sings, it is his joy. Proportion his song to his nature, and you shall see ! So long as he had

the Carmagnole merely for his chorus, he overthrew only Louis XVI.; let him sing the Marseillaise, and he will deliver the world.

Writing this note in the margin of the Anglès report, we will return to our four couples. The dinner, as we have said, was over.

## V.

### A CHAPTER OF SELF-ADMIRATION.

TABLE talk and lovers' talk equally elude the grasp ; lovers' talk is clouds, table talk is smoke.

Fameuil and Dahlia hummed airs ; Tholomyès drank, Zéphine laughed, Fantine smiled. Listolier blew a wooden trumpet that he had bought at Saint Cloud. Favourite looked tenderly at Blacheville, and said :

“Blacheville, I adore you.”

This brought forth a question from Blacheville :

“What would you do, Favourite, if I should leave you ?”

“Me !” cried Favourite. “Oh ! do not say that, even in sport ! If you should leave me, I would run after you ; I would scratch you, I would pull your hair, I would throw water on you, I would have you arrested.”

Blacheville smiled with the effeminate foppery of a man whose self-love is tickled. Favourite continued :

“Yes ! I would cry watch ! No ! I would scream, for example : rascal !”

Blacheville, in ecstasy, leaned back in his chair, and closed both eyes with a satisfied air.

Dahlia, still eating, whispered to Favourite in the hubbub :

“Are you really so fond of your Blacheville, then ?”

“I detest him,” answered Favourite in the same tone, taking up her fork. “He is stingy ; I am in love with the little fellow over the way from where I live. He is a nice young man ; do you know him ? Anybody can see that he

was born to be an actor ! I love actors. As soon as he comes into the house his mother cries out : ‘ Oh, dear ! my peace is all gone. There, he is going to hallo ! You will split my head ;’ just because he goes into the garret among the rats, into the dark corners, as high as he can go, and sings and declaims—and how do I know that they can hear him below ! He gets twenty sous a day already by writing for a pettifogger. He is the son of an old chorister of Saint-Jacques de Huat-Pas ! Oh, he is a nice young man ! He is so fond of me that he said one day, when he saw me making batter for pancakes : ‘ Mamselle, make your gloves into fritters and I will eat them.’ Nobody but artists can say things like these ; I am on the high road to go crazy about this little fellow. It is all the same, I tell Blacheville that I adore him. How I lie ! Oh, how I lie !

Favourite paused, then continued :

“ Dahlia, you see I am melancholy. It has done nothing but rain all summer ; the wind makes me nervous and freckles me. Blacheville is very mean ; there are hardly any green peas in the market yet, people care for nothing but eating ; I have the spleen, as the English say ; butter is so dear ! and then, just think of it—it is horrible ! We are dining in a room with a bed in it. I am disgusted with life.”

## VI.

### THE WISDOM OF THOLOMYÈS.

MEANTIME, while some were singing, the rest were all noisily talking at the same time. There was a perfect uproar. Tholomyès interfered.

“ Do not talk at random, nor too fast !” exclaimed he ; “ we must take time for reflection, if we would be brilliant. Too much improvisation leaves the mind stupidly void. Running beer gathers no foam. Gentlemen, no haste.

Mingle dignity with festivity, eat with deliberation, feast slowly. Take your time. See the spring ; if it hastens forward, it is ruined ; that is, frozen. Excess of zeal kills peach and apricot trees. Excess of zeal kills the grace and joy of good dinners. No zeal, gentlemen ! Grimod de la Reynière is of Talleyrand's opinion."

"Tholomyès, let us alone," said Blacheville.

"Down with the tyrant !" cried Fameuil.

"Bombarda, Bombance, and Bamboche !" exclaimed Listolier.

"Sunday still exists," resumed Listolier.

"We are sober," added Fameuil.

"Tholomyès," said Blacheville, "behold my calmness (*mon calme*)."

"You are its marquis," replied Tholomyès.

This indifferent play on words had the effect of a stone thrown into a pool. The Marquis de Montcalm was a celebrated royalist of time. All the frogs were silent.

"My friends," exclaimed Tholomyès, in the tone of a man resuming his sway, "Collect yourselves. This pun, though it falls from heaven, should not be welcomed with too much wonder. Everything that falls in this wise is not necessarily worthy of enthusiasm and respect. The pun is the dropping of the soaring spirit. The jest falls, it matters not where. And the spirit, after freeing itself from the folly, plunges into the clouds. A white spot settling upon a rock does not prevent the condor from hovering above. Far be it from me to insult the pun. I honour it in proportion to its merits—no more. The most august, most sublime, and most charming in humanity, and perhaps out of humanity, have made plays on words. Jesus Christ made a pun on Saint Peter, Moses on Isaac, Æschylus on Polynices, Cleopatra on Octavius. And mark, that this pun of Cleopatra preceded the battle of Actium, and that, without it, no one would have remembered the city of

Toryne, a Greek name signifying dipper. This conceded, I return to my exhortation. My brethren, I repeat, no zeal, no noise, no excess, even in witticisms, mirth, gaiety, and plays on words. Listen to me ; have the prudence of Amphiaraüs, and the boldness of Cæsar. There must be a limit even to rebuses ; *Est modus in rebus.* There must be a limit even to dinners. You like apple-puffs, ladies ; do not abuse them. There must be, even in puffs, good sense and art. Gluttony punishes the glutton. Gula punishes Gulax. Indigestion is charged by God with enforcing morality on the stomach. And remember this : each of our passions, even love, has a stomach that must not be overloaded. We must in everything write the word *finis* in time ; we must restrain ourselves, when it becomes urgent ; we must draw the bolt on the appetite, play a fantasia on the violin, then break the strings with our own hands.

“The wise man is he who knows when and how to stop. Have some confidence in me. Because I have studied law a little, as my examinations prove, because I know the difference between the *question mue* and the *question pendante*, because I have written a Latin thesis on the method of torture in Rome at the time when Munatius Demens was quæstor of the Parricide ; because I am about to become doctor, as it seems, it does not follow necessarily that I am a fool. I recommend to you moderation in all your desires. As sure as my name is Felix Tholomyès, I speak wisely. Happy is he, who, when the hour comes, takes a heroic resolve, and abdicates like Sylla or Origenes.”

Favourite listened with profound attention. “Felix,” said she, “what a pretty word. I like this name. It is Latin. It means prosperous.”

Tholomyès continued :

“Quirites, gentlemen, *caballeros, mes amis*, would you feel no passion, dispense with the nuptial couch and set love at defiance? Nothing is easier. Here is the recipe : lemon-

ade, over exercise, hard labour ; tire yourselves out, draw logs, do not sleep, keep watch ; gorge yourselves with nitrous drinks and ptisans of water-lilies ; drink emulsions of poppies and agnuscastus ; enliven this with a rigid diet, starve yourselves, and add cold baths, girdles of herbs, the application of a leaden plate, lotions of solutions of lead and fomentations with vinegar and water."

"I prefer a woman," said Listolier.

"Woman!" resumed Tholomyès, "distrust the sex. Unhappy is he who surrenders himself to the changing heart of woman. Woman is perfidious and tortuous. She detests the serpent through rivalry of trade. The serpent is the shop across the way."

"Tholomyès," cried Blacheville, "you are drunk."

"The deuce I am!" said Tholomyès.

"Then be gay," resumed Blacheville.

"I agree," replied Tholomyès.

Then, filling his glass, he arose.

"Honour to wine ! *Nunc te, Bacche, canam.* Pardon, ladies, that is Spanish. And here is the proof, *señoras*; like wine-measure, like people. The arroba of Castile contains sixteen litres, the cantaro of Alicante twelve, the almuda of the Canaries twenty-five, the cuartín of the Baleares twenty-six, and the boot of Czar Peter thirty. Long live the Czar, who was great, and long live his boot, which was still greater ! Ladies, a friendly counsel ! deceive your neighbours, if it seems good to you. The characteristic of love is to rove. Love was not made to cower and crouch like an English housemaid whose knees are callused with scrubbing. Gentle love was made but to rove gaily. It has been said to err is human ; I say, to err is loving. Ladies, I idolize you all. O Zéphine, or Josephine, with face more than wrinkled, you would be charming if your were not cross. Yours is like a beautiful face, upon which some one has sat down by mistake. As to Favourite, oh, nymphs and

muses, one day, as Blacheville was crossing the Rue Guerin-Boisseau, he saw a beautiful girl with white, well-gartered stockings, who was showing them. The prologue pleased him, and Blacheville loved. She whom he loved was Favourite. Oh, Favourite. Thou hast Ionian lips. There was a Greek painter, Euphorion, who was surnamed painter of lips. This Greek alone would have been worthy to paint thy mouth. Listen! before thee there was no creature worthy of the name. Thou wert made to receive the apple like Venus, or to eat it like Eve. Beauty begins with thee. I have spoken of Eve; she was of thy creation. Thou deservest the patent for the invention of beautiful women. Oh, Favourite, I cease to thou you, for I pass from poetry to prose. You spoke just now of my name. It moved me; but, whatever we do, let us not trust to names, they may be deceitful. I am called Felix, I am not happy. Words are deceivers. Do not blindly accept the indications which they give. It would be a mistake to write to Liege for corks or to Pau for gloves. Miss Dahlia, in your place, I should call myself Rose. The flower should have fragrance, and woman should have wit. I say nothing of Fantine, she is visionary, dreamy, pensive, sensitive; she is a phantom with the form of a nymph and the modesty of a nun, who has strayed into the life of a grisette, but who takes refuge in illusions, and who sings, and prays, and gazes at the sky without knowing clearly what she sees nor what she does, and who, with eyes fixed on heaven, wanders in a garden among more birds than exist there. Oh, Fantine, know this: I Tholomyès, am an illusion—but she does not even hear me—the fair daughter of chimeras! Nevertheless, everything on her is freshness, gentleness, youth, soft, matinal clearness. Oh, Fantine, worthy to be called Marguerite or Pearl, you are a jewel of the purest water. Ladies, a second counsel, do not marry; marriage is a graft; it may take well or ill,

Shun the risk. But what do I say? I am wasting my words. Women are incurable on the subject of weddings, and all that we wise men can say will not hinder vestmakers and garter-binders from dreaming about husbands loaded with diamonds. Well, be it so; but, beauties, remember this: you eat too much sugar. You have but one fault, oh, women! it is that of nibbling sugar. Oh, consuming sex, the pretty, little white teeth adore sugar. Now, listen attentively! Sugar is a salt. Every salt is desiccating. Sugar is the most desiccating of all salts. It sucks up the liquids from the blood through the veins; thence comes the coagulation, then the solidification of the blood; thence tubercles in the lungs; thence death. And this is why diabetes borders on consumption. Crunch no sugar, therefore, and you shall live! I turn towards the men: gentlemen, make conquests. Rob each other without remorse of your beloved. Chassez and cross over. There are no friends in love. Wherever there is a pretty woman, hostility is open. No quarter; war to the knife! A pretty woman is a *casus belli*; a pretty woman is a *flagrans delictum*. All the invasions of history have been determined by petticoats. Woman is the right of man. Romulus carried off the Sabine women; William carried off the Saxon women; Cæsar carried off the Roman women. The man who is not loved hovers like a vulture over the sweetheart of others; and for my part, to all unfortunate widowers, I issue the sublime proclamation of Bonaparte to the army of Italy, “Soldiers, you lack for everything. The enemy has everything.”

Tholomyès checked himself.

“Take breath, Tholomyès,” said Blacheville.

At the same time, Blacheville, aided by Listolier and Fameuil, with an air of lamentation hummed one of those workshop songs, made up of the first words that came, rhyming richly and not at all, void of sense as the movement of the trees and the sound of the winds, and which

are borne from the smoke of the pipes, and dissipate and take flight with it. This is the couplet by which the group replied to the harangue of Tholomyès.

Les pères dindons donnèrent  
De l'argent à un agent  
Pour que mons Clermont-Tonnerre  
Fût fait pape à la Saint-Jean;  
Mais Clermont ne put pas être  
Fait pape, n'étant pas prêtre;  
Alors leur agent rageant  
Leur rapporta leur argent.

This was not likely to calm the inspiration of Tholomyès ; he emptied his glass, filled it, and again began :

“Down with wisdom ! forget all that I have said. Let us be neither prudes, nor prudent, nor prud’hommes ! I drink to jollity ; let us be jolly. Let us finish our course of study by folly and prating. Indigestion and the Digest. Let Justinian be the male, and Festivity the female. There is joy in the abysses. Behold, oh, creation ! The world is a huge diamond ! I am happy. The birds are marvellous. What a festival everywhere ! The nightingale is an Elleviou gratis. Summer, I salute thee. Oh, Luxembourg ! Oh, Georgics of the Rue Madame, and the Allée de l’Observatoire ! Oh, entranced dreamers ! The Pampas of America would delight me, if I had not the arcades of the Odeon. My soul goes out towards virgin forests and savannahs. Everything is beautiful ; the flies hum in the sunbeams. The humming-birds whizz in the sunshine. Kiss me, Fantine !”

And, by mistake, he kissed Favourite.

## VII.

### DEATH OF A HORSE.

“THE dinners are better at Édon’s than at Bombarda’s,” exclaimed Zéphine.

"I like Bombarda better than Édon," said Blacheville. "There is more luxury. It is more Asiatic. See the lower hall. There are mirrors (*glaces*) on the walls."

"I prefer ices (*glaces*) on my plate," said Favourite.

Blacheville persisted.

"Look at the knives. The handles are silver at Bombarda's, and bone at Édon's. Now, silver is more precious than bone."

"Except when it is on the chin," observed Tholomyès.

He looked out at this moment at the dome of the Invalides, which was visible from Bombarda's windows.

There was a pause.

"Tholomyès," cried Fameuil, "Listolier and I have just had a discussion."

"A discussion is good," replied Tholomyès, "a quarrel is better."

"We were discussing philosophy."

"I have no objection."

"Which do you prefer, Descartes or Spinoza?"

"Désaugiers," said Tholomyès.

This decision rendered, he drank, and resumed :

"I consent to live. All is not over on earth, since we can yet reason falsely. I render thanks for this to the immortal Gods. We lie, but we laugh. We affirm, but we doubt. The unexpected shoots forth from a syllogism. It is fine. There are men still on earth who know how to open and shut pleasantly the surprise boxes of paradox. Know, ladies, that this wine you are drinking so calmly, is Madeira from the vineyard of Coural das Freiras, which is three hundred and seventeen fathoms above the level of the sea. Attention while you drink ! three hundred and seventeen fathoms ! and M. Bombarda, this magnificent restaurateur, gives you these three hundred and seventeen fathoms for four francs, fifty centimes."

Fameuil interrupted again.

"Tholomyès, your opinions are law. Who is your favourite author?"

"Ber—"

"Quin?"

"No. Choux."

And Tholomyès continued.

"Honour to Bombarda! he would equal Munophis of Elephanta if he could procure me an almée and Thygelion of Chæronea if he could bring me a hetaïra! for, oh, ladies, there were Bombardas in Greece and Egypt; this Apuleius teaches us. Alas! always the same thing and nothing new. Nothing more unpublished in the creation of the Creator! , says Solomon; *amor omnibus idem*, says Virgil; and Carabine mounts with Carabin in the galliot at Saint Cloud, as Aspasia embarked with Pericles on the fleet of Samos. A last word. Do you know who this Aspasia was, ladies? Although she lived in a time when women had not yet a soul, she was a soul; a soul of a rose and purple shade, more glowing than fire, fresher than the dawn. Aspasia was a being who touched the two extremes of woman, the prostitute goddess. She was Socrates, plus Manon Lescaut. Aspasia was created in case Prometheus might need a wanton."

Tholomyès, now that he was started would have been stopped with difficulty, had not a horse fallen down at this moment on the quai. The shock stopped short both the cart and the orator. It was an old meagre mare, worthy of the knacker, harnessed to a very heavy cart. On reaching Bombarda's, the beast, worn and exhausted, had refused to go further. This incident attracted a crowd. Scarcely had the carman, swearing and indignant, had time to utter with fitting energy the decisive word, "*mâtin!*" backed by a terrible stroke of the whip, when the hack fell, to rise no more. At the hubbub of the passers-by, the merry auditors of Tholomyès turned their heads, and Tholomyès

profited by it to close his address by a melancholy strophe :

Elle était de ce monde où coucous et carrosses  
Ont le même destin ;  
Et, rosse, elle a vécu ce que vivent les rosses,  
L'espace d'un matin !

“ Poor horse ! ” sighed Fantine.

Dahlia exclaimed :

“ Here is Fantine pitying horses ! Was there ever anything so absurd ? ”

At this moment, Favourite, crossing her arms and turning round her head, looked fixedly at Tholomyès and said :

“ Come ! the surprise ? ”

“ Precisely. The moment has come,” replied Tholomyès. “ Gentlemen, the hour has come for surprising these ladies. Ladies, wait for us a moment.”

“ It begins with a kiss,” said Blacheville.

“ On the forehead,” added Tholomyès.

Each one gravely placed a kiss on the forehead of his mistress ; after which they directed their steps towards the door, all four in file, laying their fingers on their lips.

Favourite clapped her hands as they went out.

“ It is amusing already,” said she.

“ Do not be too long,” murmured Fantine. “ We are waiting for you.”

## VIII.

### JOYOUS END OF JOY.

THE girls, left alone, leaned their elbows on the window sills in couples, and chattered together, bending their heads and speaking from one window to the other.

They saw the young men go out of Bombarda’s, arm in arm ; they turned round, made signals to them laughingly, then disappeared in the dusty Sunday crowd which takes possession of the Champs-Elysées once a week.

“Do not be long !” cried Fantine.

“What are they going to bring us ?” said Zéphine.

“Surely something pretty,” said Dahlia.

“I hope it will be gold,” resumed Favourite.

They were soon distracted by the stir on the water’s edge, which they distinguished through the branches of the tall trees, and which diverted them greatly. It was the hour for the departure of the mails and diligences. Almost all the stage-coaches to the south and west, passed at that time by the Champs-Elysées. The greater part followed the quai and went out through the Barrière Passy. Every minute some huge vehicle, painted yellow and black, heavily loaded, noisily harnessed, distorted with mails, awnings, and valises, full of heads that were constantly disappearing, grinding the curb stones, turning the pavements into flints, rushed through the crowd, throwing out sparks like a forge, with dust for smoke, and an air of fury. This hubbub delighted the young girls. Favourite exclaimed :

“What an uproar ; one would say that heaps of chains were taking flight.”

It so happened that one of these vehicles which could be distinguished with difficulty through the obscurity of the elms, stopped for a moment, then set out again on a gallop. This surprised Fantine.

“It is strange,” said she, “I thought the diligences never stopped.”

Favourite shrugged her shoulders.

“This Fantine is surprising ; I look at her with curiosity. She wonders at the most simple things. Suppose that I am a traveller, and say to the diligence ; ‘I am going on ; you can take me up on the quai in passing.’ The diligence passes, sees me, stops and takes me up. This happens every day. You know nothing of life, my dear.”

Some time passed in this manner. Suddenly Favourite started as if from sleep.

“Well !” said she, “and the surprise?”

“Yes,” returned Dahlia, “the famous surprise.”

“They are very long !” said Fantine.

As Fantine finished the sigh, the boy who had waited at dinner entered. He had in his hand something that looked like a letter.

“What is that ?” asked Favourite.

“It is a paper that the gentlemen left for these ladies,” he replied.

“Why did you not bring it at once ?”

“Because the gentlemen ordered me not to give it to the ladies before an hour,” returned the boy.

Favourite snatched the paper from his hands. It was really a letter.

“Stop !” said she. “There is no address ; but see what is written on it :

“THIS IS THE SURPRISE.”

She hastily unsealed the letter, opened it, and read (she knew how to read) :

“Oh, our lovers !

“Know that we have parents. Parents—you scarcely know the meaning of the word, they are what are called fathers and mothers in the civil code, simple but honest. Now these parents bemoan us, these old men claim us, these good men and women call us prodigal sons, desire our return and offer to kill for us the fatted calf. We obey them being virtuous. At the moment when you read this, five mettlesome horses will be bearing us back to our papas and mammas. We are pitching our camps, as Bossuet says. We are going, we are gone. We fly in the arms of Laffitte, and on the wings of Caillard. The Toulouse diligence snatches us from the abyss, and you are this abyss, our beautiful darlings ! We are returning to society, to duty and order, on a full trot, at the rate of three leagues an hour

“It is necessary to the country that we become, like everybody else, prefects, fathers of families, rural guards, and councillors of state. Venerate us. We sacrifice ourselves. Mourn for us rapidly, and replace us speedily. If this letter rends you, rend it in turn. Adieu.

“For nearly two years we have made you happy. Bear us no ill-will for it.

“*Signed* : BLACHEVILLE,  
FAMEUIL,  
LISTOLIER,  
FELIX THOLOMYÈS.

“P.S. The dinner is paid for.”

The four girls gazed at each other.

Favourite was the first to break silence.

“Well !” said she, “it is a good farce all the same.”

“It is very droll,” said Zéphine.

“It must have been Blacheville that had the idea,” resumed Favourite. “This makes me in love with him. Soon loved, soon gone. That is the story.”

“No,” said Dahlia, “it is an idea of Tholomyès. This is clear.”

“In that case,” returned Favourite, “down with Blacheville, and long live Tholomyès !”

“Long live Tholomyès !” cried Dahlia and Zéphine.

And they burst into laughter.

Fantine laughed like the rest.

An hour afterwards, when she had re-entered her chamber, she wept. It was her first love, as we have said ; she had given herself to this Tholomyès as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child.



## Book Fourth

### TO ENTRUST IS SOMETIMES TO ABANDON

#### I.

##### ONE MOTHER MEETS ANOTHER.

THERE was, during the first quarter of the present century, at Montfermeil, near Paris, a sort of chop-house: it is not there now. It was kept by a man and his wife, named Thenardier, and was situated in the lane Boulanger. Above the door, nailed flat against the wall, was a board, upon which something was painted that looked like a man carrying on his back another man wearing the heavy epaulettes of a general, gilt and with large silver stars, red blotches, typified blood; the remainder of the picture was smoke, and probably represented a battle. Beneath was this inscription: THE SERGEANT OF WATERLOO.

Nothing is commoner than a cart or waggon before the door of an inn; nevertheless the vehicle, or more properly speaking, the fragment of a vehicle which obstructed the street in front of the Sergeant of Waterloo one evening in

the spring of 1815, certainly would have attracted by its bulk the attention of any painter who might have been passing.

It was the fore-carriage of one of those drays for carrying heavy articles, used in wooded countries for transporting joists and trunks of trees : it consisted of a massive iron axle-tree with a pivot to which a heavy pole was attached, and which was supported by two enormous wheels. As a whole, it was squat, crushing, and misshapen ; it might have been fancied a gigantic gun-carriage.

The roads had covered the wheels, felloes, limbs, axle, and the pole, with a coating of hideous yellow-hued mud, similar in tint to that with which cathedrals are sometimes decorated. The wood had disappeared beneath mud ; and the iron beneath rust.

Under the axle-tree hung festooned a huge chain fit for a Goliath of the galleys.

This chain recalled, not the beams which it was used to carry, but the mastodons and mammoths which it might have harnessed ; it reminded one of the galleys, but of cyclopean and superhuman galleys, and seemed as if unrivetted from some monster. With it Homer could have bound Polyphemus, or Shakspeare Caliban.

Why was this vehicle in this place in the street, one may ask ? First to obstruct the lane, and then to complete its work of rust. There is in the old social order a host of institutions which we find like this across our path in the full light of day, and which present no other reasons for being there.

The middle of the chain was hanging quite near the ground, under the axle ; and upon the bend, as on a swinging rope, two little girls were seated that evening in exquisite grouping, the smaller eighteen months old, in the lap of the larger, who was two years and a half old.

A handkerchief carefully knotted kept them from falling.

A mother, looking upon this frightful chain, had said :  
“ Ah ! there is a plaything for my children !”

The radiant children, picturesquely and tastefully decked, might be fancied two roses twining the rusty iron, with their triumphantly sparkling eyes, and their blooming, laughing faces. One was a rosy blonde, the other a brunette ; their artless faces were two ravishing surprises ; the perfume that was shed upon the air by a flowering shrub near by seemed their own outbreathings ; the smaller one was showing her pretty little body with the chaste indecency of babyhood. Above and around these delicate heads, moulded in happiness and bathed in light, the gigantic carriage, black with rust and almost frightful with its entangled curves and abrupt angles, arched like the mouth of a cavern.

The mother, a woman whose appearance was rather forbidding, but touching at this moment, was seated on the sill of the inn, swinging the two children by a long string, while she brooded them with her eyes for fear of accident with that animal but heavenly expression peculiar to maternity. At each vibration the hideous links uttered a creaking noise like an angry cry ; the little ones were in ecstasies, the setting sun mingled in the joy, and nothing could be more charming than this caprice of chance which made of a Titan’s chain a swing for cherubim.

While rocking the babes the mother sang with a voice out of tune a then popular song :

“ It must be so, a warrior said.”

Her song and watching her children prevented her hearing and seeing what was passing in the street.

Some one, however, had approached her as she was beginning the first couplet of the song, and suddenly she heard a voice say quite near her ear :

“ You have two pretty children there, Madame.”

“ To the sweet lovely Imagine,”

answered the mother, continuing her song ; then she turned her head.

A woman was before her at a little distance ; she also had a child, which she bore in her arms.

She was carrying in addition a large carpet-bag, which seemed heavy.

This woman's child was one of the divinest beings that can be imagined, a little girl of two or three years. She might have entered the lists with the other little ones for coquetry of attire ; she wore a head-dress of fine linen ; ribbons at her shoulders and Valenciennes lace on her cap. The folds of her skirt were raised enough to show her plump fine white leg : she was charmingly rosy and healthful. The pretty little creature gave one a desire to bite her cherry cheeks. We can say nothing of her eyes except that they must have been very large, and were fringed with superb lashes. She was asleep.

She was sleeping in the absolutely confiding slumber peculiar to her age. Mothers' arms are made of tenderness, and sweet sleep blesses the child who lies therein.

As to the mother, she seemed poor and sad ; she had the appearance of a working woman who is seeking to return to the life of a peasant. She was young,—and pretty ? It was possible, but in that garb beauty could not be displayed. Her hair, one blonde mesh of which had fallen, seemed very thick, but it was severely fastened up beneath an ugly, close, narrow nun's head-dress, tied under the chin. Laughing shows fine teeth when one has them, but she did not laugh. Her eyes seemed not to have been tearless for a long time. She was pale, and looked very weary, and somewhat sick. She gazed upon her child, sleeping in her arms, with that peculiar look which only a mother possesses who nurses her own child. Her form was clumsily masked by a large blue handkerchief folded across her bosom. Her hands were tanned and spotted

with freckles, the forefinger hardened and pricked with the needle ; she wore a coarse brown delaine mantle, a calico dress, and large heavy shoes. It was Fantine.

Yes, Fantine. Hard to recognise, yet, on looking attentively, you saw that she still retained her beauty. A sad line, such as is formed by irony, had marked her right cheek. As to her toilette—that airy toilette of muslin and ribbons which seemed as if made of gaiety, folly, and music, full of baubles and perfumed with lilacs—that had vanished like the beautiful sparkling hoarfrost, which we take for diamonds in the sun ; they melt, and leave the branch dreary and black.

Ten months had slipped away since “the good farce.”

What had passed during these ten months. We can guess.

After recklessness, trouble. Fantine had lost sight of Favourite, Zéphine, and Dahlia ; the tie, broken on the part of the men, was unloosed on the part of the women ; they would have been astonished if any one had said a fortnight afterwards they were friends ; they had no longer cause to be so. Fantine was left alone. The father of her child gone—Alas ! such partings are irrevocable—she found herself absolutely isolated, with the habit of labour lost, and the taste for pleasure acquired. Led by her liaison with Tholomyès to disdain the small business that she knew how to do, she had neglected her opportunities, they were all gone. No resource. Fantine could scarcely read, and did not know how to write. She had only been taught in childhood how to sign her name. She had a letter written by a public letter-writer to Tholomyès, then a second, then a third. Tholomyès had replied to none of them. One day, Fantine heard some old women saying as they saw her child : “Do people ever take such children to heart ? They only shrug their shoulders at such children !” Then she thought of Tholomyès, who shrugged his shoulders

at his child, and who did not take this innocent child to heart, and her heart became dark in the place that was his. What should she do? She had no one to ask. She had committed a fault; but, in the depths of her nature, we know dwelt modesty and virtue. She had a vague feeling that she was on the eve of falling into distress, of slipping into the street. She must have courage; she had it, and bore up bravely. The idea occurred to her of returning to her native village M—— sur M——, there perhaps some one would know her, and give her work. Yes, but she must hide her fault. And she had a confused glimpse of the possible necessity of a separation still more painful than the first. Her heart ached, but she took her resolution. It will be seen that Fantine possessed the stern courage of life. She had already valiantly renounced her finery, was draped in calico, and had put all her silks, her gewgaws, her ribbons, and laces on her daughter—the only vanity that remained, and that a holy one. She sold all she had, which gave her two hundred francs; when her little debts were paid, she had but about eighty left. At twenty-two years of age, on a fine spring morning, she left Paris, carrying her child on her back. He who had seen the two passing, must have pitied them. The woman had nothing in the world but this child, and this child had nothing in the world but this woman. Fantine had nursed her child; that had weakened her chest somewhat, and she coughed slightly.

We shall have no further need to speak of M. Félix Tholomyès. We will only say here, that twenty years later under King Louis Philippe, he was a fat provincial attorney, rich and influential, a wise elector and rigid juryman; always, however, a man of pleasure.

Towards noon, after having, for the sake of rest, travelled from time to time at a cost of three or four cents a league, in what they called then the Petites Voitures of the environs

of Paris, Fantine reached Montfermeil, and stood in Boulangier lane.

As she was passing by the Thenardier chop-house, the two little children sitting in delight on their monstrous swing, had a sort of dazzling effect upon her, and she paused before this joyous vision.

There are charms. These two little girls were one for this mother.

She beheld them with emotion. The presence of angels is a herald of paradise. She thought she saw above this inn the mysterious “HERE” of Providence. These children were evidently happy: she gazed upon them, she admired them, so much affected that at the moment when the mother was taking breath between the verses of her song, she could not help saying what we have been reading.

“You have two pretty children there, Madame.”

The most ferocious animals are disarmed by caresses to their young.

The mother raised her head and thanked her, and made the stranger sit down on the stone step, she herself being on the doorsill: the two women began to talk together.

“My name is Madame Thenardier,” said the mother of the two girls: “we keep this inn.”

Then going on with her song, she sang between her teeth:

“It must be so, the warrior said.”

This Madame Thenardier was a red-haired, brawny, angular woman, of the soldier’s wife type in all its horror; and, singularly enough, she had a lolling air which she had gained from novel-reading. She was a masculine lackadaisicalness. Old romances impressed on the imaginations of mistresses of chop-houses have such effects. She was still young, scarcely thirty years old. If this woman, who was seated stooping, had been upright, perhaps her towering

form and her broad shoulders, those of a movable colossus, fit for a market-woman, would have dismayed the traveller, disturbed her confidence, and prevented what we have to relate. A person seated instead of standing ; fate hangs on such a thread as that.

The traveller told her story, a little modified.

She said she was a working woman, and her husband was dead. Not being able to procure work in Paris she was going in search of it elsewhere ; in her own province ; that she had left Paris that morning on foot : that carrying her child, she had become tired, and meeting the Villemomble stage had got in ; that from Villemomble she had come on foot to Montfermeil ; that the child had walked a little, but not much, she was so young ; that she was compelled to carry her, and the jewel had fallen asleep.

And at these words she gave her daughter a passionate kiss, which wakened her. The child opened its large blue eyes, like its mother's, and saw—what ? Nothing, everything, with that serious and sometimes severe air of little children, which is one of the mysteries of their shining innocence before our shadowy virtues. One would say that they felt themselves to be angels, and knew us to be human. Then the child began to laugh, and, although the mother restrained her, slipped to the ground, with the indomitable energy of a little one that wants to run about. All at once she perceived the two others in their swing, stopped short, and put out her tongue in token of admiration.

Mother Thenardier untied the children and took them from the swing, saying :

“Play together, all three of you.”

At that age acquaintance is easy, and in a moment the little Thenardiers were playing with the new comer, making holes in the ground to their intense delight.

This new comer was very sprightly : the goodness of the mother is written in the gaiety of the child ; she had taken

a splinter of wood, which she used as a spade, and was stoutly digging a hole fit for a fly. The gravedigger's work is charming when done by a child.

The two women continued to chat.

“What do you call your little one?”

“Cosette.”

For Cosette read Euphrasie. The name of the little one was Euphrasie. But the mother had made Cosette out of it, by that sweet and charming instinct of mothers and of the people who change Jósefa into Pepita, and Françoise into Sillette. That is a kind of derivation which deranges and disconcerts etymologists. We knew a grandmother who succeeded in making from Theodore, Gnon.

“How old is she?”

“She is going on three years.”

“The age of my oldest.”

The three girls were grouped in an attitude of deep anxiety and bliss ; a great event had occurred ; a large worm had come out of the ground ; they were afraid of it, and yet in ecstasies over it.

Their bright foreheads touched each other : three heads in one halo of glory.

“Children,” exclaimed the Thenardier mother ; “how soon they know one another. See them ! One would swear they were three sisters.”

These words were the spark which the other mother was probably awaiting. She seized the hand of Madame Thenardier and said :

“Will you keep my child for me ?”

Madame Thenardier made a motion of surprise, which was neither consent nor refusal.

Cosette's mother continued :

“You see I cannot take my child into the country. Work forbids it. With a child I could not find a place there ; they are so absurd in that district. It is God who

has led me before your inn. The sight of your little ones, so pretty, and clean, and happy, has overwhelmed me. I said: there is a good mother; they will be like three sisters, and then it will not be long before I come back. Will you keep my child for me?"

"I must think over it," said Thenardier.

"I will give six francs a month."

Here a man's voice was heard from within:

"Not less than seven francs, and six months paid in advance."

"Six times seven are forty-two," said Thenardier.

"I will give it," said the mother.

"And fifteen francs extra for the first expenses," added the man.

"That's fifty-seven francs," said Madame Thenardier, and in the midst of her reckoning she sang indistinctly:

"It must be so, the warrior said."

"I will give it," said the mother; "I have eighty francs. That will leave me enough to go into the country if I walk. I will earn some money there, and as soon as I have I will come for my little love."

The man's voice returned:

"Has the child a wardrobe?"

"That is my husband," said Thenardier.

"Certainly she has, the poor darling. I knew it was your husband. And a fine wardrobe it is too, an extravagant wardrobe, everything in dozens, and silk dresses like a lady. They are there in my carpet-bag."

"You must leave that here," put in the man's voice.

"Of course I shall give it to you," said the mother; "it would be strange if I should leave my child naked."

The face of the master appeared.

"It is all right," said he.

The bargain was concluded. The mother passed the

night at the inn, gave her money and left her child, fastened again her carpet-bag, diminished by her child's wardrobe, and very light now, and set off next morning, expecting soon to return. These partings are arranged tranquilly, but they are full of despair.

A neighbour of the Thenardiers met this mother on her way, and came in, saying :

"I have just met a woman in the street, who was crying as if her heart would break."

When Cosette's mother had gone, the man said to his wife :

"That will do me for my note of 110 francs which falls due to-morrow ; I was fifty francs short. Do you know I should have had a sheriff and a protest ? You have proved a good mouse-trap with your little ones."

"Without knowing it," said the woman.

## II.

### FIRST SKETCH OF TWO EQUIVOCAL FACES.

THE captured mouse was a very puny one, but the cat exulted even over a lean mouse.

What were the Thenardiers ?

We will say but a word just here ; by-and-by the sketch shall be completed.

They belonged to that nondescript class formed of low people who have risen, and intelligent people who have fallen, which lies between the classes called middle and lower, and which unites some of the faults of the latter with nearly all the vices of the former, without possessing the generous impulses of the workman, or the respectability of the bourgeois.

They were of those dwarfish natures, which, if perchance heated by some sullen fire, easily become monstrous. The

woman was at heart a brute ; the man a blackguard : both in the highest degree capable of that hideous species of progress which can be made towards evil. There are souls which, crab-like, crawl continually towards darkness, going back in life rather than advancing in it ; using what experience they have to increase their deformity ; growing worse without ceasing, and becoming steeped more and more thoroughly in an intensifying wickedness. Such souls were this man and this woman.

The man especially would have been a puzzle to a physiognomist. We have only to look at some men to distrust them, for we feel the darkness of their souls in two ways. They are restless as to what is behind them, and threatening as to what is before them. They are full of mystery. We can no more answer for what they have done, than for what they will do. The shadow in their looks denounces them. If we hear them utter a word, or see them make a gesture, we catch glimpses of guilty secrets in their past, and dark mysteries in their future.

This Thenardier, if we may believe him, had been a soldier, a sergeant he said ; he probably had made the campaign of 1815, and had even borne himself bravely according to all that appeared. We shall see hereafter in what his bravery consisted. The sign of his inn was an allusion to one of his feats of arms. He had painted it himself, for he knew how to do a little of everything—badly.

It was the time when the antique classical romance, which, after having been *Clelié*, sank to *Lodoïska*, always noble, but becoming more and more vulgar, falling from Mdlle. de Scuderi to Madame Bourdon-Malarme, and from Madame de Lafayette to Madame Barthélemy-Hadot, was firing the loving souls of the portresses of Paris, and making some ravages even in the suburbs. Madame Thenardier was just intelligent enough to read that sort of book. She

fed on them. She drowned what little brain she had in them; and that had given her, while she was yet young, and even in later life, a kind of pensive attitude towards her husband, a knave of some calibre ; a ruffian, educated almost to the extent of grammar : at once coarse and fine, but so far as sentimentalism was concerned, reading Pigault Lebrun, and “all which related to the sex,” as he said in his jargon, a correct dolt without adulteration. His wife was twelve or fifteen years younger than he. At a later period, when the hair of the romantic weepers began to grow grey, when Mégère parted company with Pamela, Madame Thenardier was only a gross bad woman who had relished stupid novels. Now, people do not read stupidities with impunity. The result was, that her eldest child was named Eponine, and the youngest, who had just escaped being called Gulnare, owed to some happy diversion made by a novel of Ducray Duminil, the mitigation of Azelma.

However, let us say by the way, all things are not ridiculous and superficial in this singular epoch to which we allude, and which might be termed the anarchy of baptismal names. Besides this romantic element which we have noticed, there is the social symptom. To-day it is not unfrequent to see herdsboys named Arthur, Alfred, and Alphonse, and viscounts—if there be any remaining—named Thomas, Peter, or James. This change, which places the “elegant” name on the plebeian and the country appellation on the aristocrat, is only an eddy in the tide of equality. The irresistible penetration of a new inspiration is there as well as in everything else : beneath this apparent discordance there is a reality grand and deep—the French Revolution.

## III.

## THE LARK.

To be wicked does not insure prosperity—so the inn did not succeed well.

Thanks to Fantine's fifty-seven francs, Thenardier had been able to avoid a protest and to honour his signature. The next month they were still in need of money, and the woman carried Cosette's wardrobe to Paris and pawned it for sixty francs. When this sum was spent, the Thenardiers began to look upon the little girl as a child which they sheltered for charity, and treated her as such. Her clothes being gone, they dressed her in the cast-off garments of the little Thenardiers, that is in rags. They fed her on the orts and ends, a little better than the dog, and a little worse than the cat. The dog and cat were her messmates, Cosette ate with them under the table, in a wooden dish like theirs.

Her mother, as we shall see hereafter, who had found a place at M—— sur M——, wrote, or rather had some one write for her, every month, inquiring for news of her child. The Thenardiers replied invariably :

“Cosette is doing wonderfully well.”

The six months passed away : the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month, and continued to send this sum regularly month after month. The year was not ended before Thenardier said : “A pretty price that is. What does she expect us to do for her seven francs?” And he wrote demanding twelve francs. The mother, whom he persuaded that her child was happy and doing well, assented, and forwarded the twelve francs.

There are certain natures which cannot have love on one side without hatred on the other. This Thenardier mother passionately loved her own little ones : this made her detest

the young stranger. It is sad to think that a mother's love can have such a dark side. Little as was the place Cosette occupied in the house, it seemed to her that this little was taken from her children, and that the little one lessened the air hers breathed. This woman, like many women of her kind, had a certain amount of caresses, and blows, and hard words to dispense each day. If she had not had Cosette, it is certain that her daughters, idolized as they were, would have received all, but the little stranger did them the service to attract the blows to herself; her children had only the caresses. Cosette could not stir that she did not draw down upon herself a hailstorm of undeserved and severe chastisements. A weak, soft little one who knew nothing of this world, or of God, continually ill-treated, scolded, punished, beaten, she saw beside her two other young things like herself, who lived in a halo of glory !

The woman was unkind to Cosette, Eponine and Azelma were unkind also. Children at that age are only copies of the mother ; the size is reduced, that is all.

A year passed and then another.

People used to say in the village :

"What good people these Thenardiers are ! They are not rich, and yet they bring up a poor child, that has been left with them."

They thought Cosette was forgotten by her mother.

Meantime Thenardier, having learned in some obscure way that the child was probably illegitimate, and that its mother could not acknowledge it, demanded fifteen francs a month, saying "that the 'creature' was growing and eating," and threatening to send her away. "She won't humbug me," he exclaimed, "I will confound her with the brat in the midst of her concealment. I must have more money." The mother paid the fifteen francs.

From year to year the child grew, and her misery also.

So long as Cosette was very small, she was the scapegoat

of the two other children ; as soon as she began to grow a little, that is to say, before she was five years old, she became the servant of the house.

Five years old, it will be said, that is improbable. Alas ! it is true, social suffering begins at all ages. Have we not seen lately the trial of Dumolland, an orphan become a bandit, who, from the age of five, say the official documents, being alone in the world, "worked for his living and stole!"

Cosette was made to run of errands, sweep the rooms, the yard, the street, wash the dishes, and even carry burdens. The Thenardiers felt doubly authorized to treat her thus, as the mother, who still remained at M—— sur M——, began to be remiss in her payments. Some months remained due.

Had this mother returned to Montferniel at the end of these three years she would not have known her child. Cosette, so fresh and pretty when she came to that house, was now thin and wan. She had a peculiar restless air. Sly ! said the Thenardiers.

Injustice had made her sullen, and misery had made her ugly. Her fine eyes only remained to her, and they were painful to look at, for, large as they were, they seemed to increase the sadness !

It was a harrowing sight to see in the winter time the poor child not yet six years old, shivering under the tatters of what was once a calico dress, sweeping the street before daylight with an enormous broom in her little red hands and tears in her large eyes.

In the place she was called the Lark. People like figurative names, and were pleased thus to name this little being, not larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and shivering, awake every morning first of all in the house and the village, always in the street or in the fields before dawn.

Only the poor lark never sang.



## Book Fifth

### THE DESCENT

#### I.

##### HISTORY OF AN IMPROVEMENT IN JET-WORK.

WHAT had become of this mother in the meanwhile, who, according to the people of Montfermeil, seemed to have abandoned her child? where was she? what was she doing?

After leaving her little Cosette with the Thenardiers, she went on her way and arrived at M—— sur M——.

This, it will be remembered, was in 1818.

Fantine had left the province some twelve years before, and M—— sur M—— had greatly changed in appearance. While Fantine had been slowly sinking deeper and deeper into misery, her native village had been prosperous.

Within about two years there had been accomplished there one of those industrial changes which are the great events of small communities.

This circumstance is important and we think it well to relate it, we might even say to italicize it.

From time immemorial the special occupation of the in-

habitants of M—— sur M—— had been the imitation of English jets and German black glass trinkets. The business had always been dull in consequence of the high price of the raw material, which reacted upon the manufacture. At the time of Fantine's return to M—— sur M—— an entire transformation had been effected in the production of these "black goods." Towards the end of the year 1815, an unknown man had established himself in the city, and had conceived the idea of substituting gum-lac for resin in the manufacture; and for bracelets, in particular, he made the clasps by simply bending the ends of the metal together instead of soldering them.

This very slight change had worked a revolution.

This very slight change had in fact reduced the price of the raw material enormously, and this had rendered it possible, first, to raise the wages of the labourer—a benefit to the country—secondly, to improve the quality of the goods—an advantage for the consumer—and thirdly, to sell them at a lower price even while making three times the profit—a gain for the manufacturer.

Thus we have three results from one idea.

In less than three years the inventor of this process had become rich, which was well, and had made all around him rich, which was better. He was a stranger in the Department. Nothing was known of his birth, and but little of his early history.

The story went that he came to the city with very little money, a few hundred francs at most.

From this slender capital, under the inspiration of an ingenious idea, made fruitful by order and care, he had drawn a fortune for himself, and a fortune for the whole region.

On his arrival at M—— sur M—— he had the dress, the manners, and the language of a labourer only.

It seems that the very day on which he thus obscurely entered the little city of M—— sur M——, just at dusk on

a December evening, with his bundle on his back, and a thorn stick in his hand, a great fire had broken out in the town-house. This man rushed into the fire, and saved, at the peril of his life, two children, who proved to be those of the captain of the gendarmerie, and in the hurry and gratitude of the moment no one thought to ask him for his passport. He was known from that time by the name of Father Madeleine.

## II.

### MADELEINE.

HE was a man of about fifty, who always appeared to be preoccupied in mind, and who was good-natured ; this was all that could be said about him.

Thanks to the rapid progress of this manufacture, to which he had given such wonderful life, M—— sur M—— had become a considerable centre of business. Immense purchases were made there every year for the Spanish markets, where there is a large demand for jet-work, and M—— sur M——, in this branch of trade, almost competed with London and Berlin. The profits of Father Madeleine were so great that by the end of the second year he was able to build a large factory, in which there were two immense workshops, one for men and the other for women: whoever was needy could go there and be sure of finding work and wages. Father Madeleine required the men to be willing, the women to be of good morals, and all to be honest. He divided the workshops, and separated the sexes in order that the girls and the women might not lose their modesty. On this point he was inflexible, although it was the only one in which he was in any degree rigid. He was confirmed in this severity by the opportunities for corruption that abounded in M—— sur M——, it being a garrisoned city. Finally his coming had been a beneficence, and his presence

was a providence. Before the arrival of Father Madeleine, the whole region was languishing ; now it was all alive with the healthy strength of labour. An active circulation kindled everything and penetrated everywhere. Idleness and misery were unknown. There was no pocket so obscure that it did not contain some money, and no dwelling so poor that it was not the abode of some joy.

Father Madeleine employed everybody ; he had only one condition, “Be an honest man !” “Be an honest woman !”

As we have said, in the midst of this activity, of which he was the cause and the pivot, Father Madeleine had made his fortune, but, very strangely for a mere man of business, that did not appear to be his principal care. It seemed that he thought much for others, and little for himself. In 1820, it was known that he had six hundred and thirty thousand francs standing to his credit in the banking-house of Laffitte ; but before setting aside this six hundred and thirty thousand francs for himself, he had expended more than a million for the city and for the poor.

The hospital was poorly endowed, and he made provision for ten additional beds. M—— sur M—— is divided into the upper city and the lower city. The lower city, where he lived, had only one school-house, a miserable hovel which was fast going to ruin ; he built two, one for girls, and the other for boys, and paid the two teachers, from his own pocket, double the amount of their meagre salary from the government ; and one day, he said to a neighbour who expressed surprise at this : “The two highest functionaries of the State are the nurse and the schoolmaster.” He built, at his own expense, a house of refuge, an institution then almost unknown in France, and provided a fund for old and infirm labourers. About his factory, as a centre, a new quarter of the city had rapidly grown up, containing many indigent families, and he established a pharmacy that was free to all.

At first, when he began to attract the public attention, the good people would say: "This is a fellow who wishes to get rich." When they saw him enrich the country before he enriched himself, the same good people said: "This man is ambitious." This seemed the more probable, since he was religious and observed the forms of the church, to a certain extent, a thing much approved in those days. He went regularly to hear mass every Sunday. The local deputy, who scented rivalry everywhere, was not slow to borrow trouble on account of Madeleine's religion. This deputy, who had been a member of the Corps Legislatif of the Empire, partook of the religious ideas of a Father of the Oratory, known by the name of Fouché, Duke of Otranto, whose creature and friend he had been. In private he jested a little about God. But when he saw the rich manufacturer, Madeleine, go to low mass at seven o'clock, he foresaw a possible candidate in opposition to himself, and he resolved to outdo him. He took a jesuit confessor, and went both to high mass and to vespers. Ambition at that time was, as the word itself imports, of the nature of a steeplechase. The poor, as well as God, gained by the terror of the honourable deputy, for he also established two beds at the hospital, which made twelve.

At length, in 1819, it was reported in the city one morning, that upon the recommendation of the prefect, and in consideration of the services he had rendered to the country, Father Madeleine had been appointed by the King, Mayor of M—— sur M——. Those who had pronounced the newcomer "an ambitious man," eagerly seized this opportunity, which all men desire, to exclaim:

"There ! what did I tell you ?"

M—— sur M—— was filled with the rumour, and the report proved to be well founded, for a few days afterwards, the nomination appeared in the *Moniteur*. The next day Father Madeleine declined.

In the same year, 1819, the results of the new process invented by Madeleine, had a place in the Industrial Exhibition, and upon the report of the Jury, the King named the inventor a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Here was a new rumour for the Little City, “Well, it was the Cross of the Legion of Honour that he wanted.” Father Madeleine declined the Cross.

Decidedly this man was an enigma, and the good people gave up the field, saying, “After all, he is a sort of adventurer.”

As we have seen, the country owed a great deal to this man, and the poor owed him everything; he was so useful that all were compelled to honour him, and so kind that none could help loving him; his workmen in particular adored him, and he received their adoration with a sort of melancholy gravity. After he became rich, those who constituted “society” bowed to him as they met, and, in the city, he began to be called Monsieur Madeleine;—but his workmen and the children continued to call him *Father Madeleine*, and at that name his face always wore a smile. As his wealth increased, invitations rained in on him. “Society” claimed him. The little exclusive parlours of M—— sur M——, which were carefully guarded, and in earlier days, of course, had been closed to the artisan, opened wide their doors to the millionaire. A thousand advances were made to him, but he refused them all.

And again the gossips were at no loss. “He is an ignorant man, and of poor education. No one knows where he came from. He does not know how to conduct himself in good society, and it is by no means certain that he knows how to read.”

When they saw him making money, they said, “He is a merchant.” When they saw the way in which he scattered his money, they said, “He is ambitious.” When they saw him refuse to accept honours, they said, “He is an adven-

turer." When they saw him repel the advances of the fashionable, they said, "He is a brute."

In 1820, five years after his arrival at M—— sur M——, the services that he had rendered to the region were so brilliant, and the wish of the whole population was so unanimous, that the King again appointed him Mayor of the city. He refused again; but the prefect resisted his determination, the principal citizens came and urged him to accept, and the people in the streets begged him to do so; all insisted so strongly that at last he yielded. It was remarked that what appeared most of all to bring him to this determination, was the almost angry exclamation of an old woman belonging to the poorer class, who cried out to him from her door-stone, with some temper:

"A good mayor is a good thing. Are you afraid of the good you can do?"

This was the third step in his ascent. Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine, and Monsieur Madeleine now became Monsieur the Mayor.

### III.

#### MONEY'S DEPOSITED WITH LAFFITTE.

NEVERTHELESS he remained as simple as at first. He had grey hair, a serious eye, the brown complexion of a labourer, and the thoughtful countenance of a philosopher. He usually wore a hat with a wide brim, and a long coat of coarse cloth, buttoned to the chin. He fulfilled his duties as Mayor, but beyond that his life was isolated. He talked with very few persons. He shrank from compliments, and with a touch of the hat walked on rapidly; he smiled to avoid talking, and gave to avoid smiling. The women said of him: "What a good bear!" His pleasure was to walk in the fields.

He always took his meals alone with a book open before him in which he read. His library was small but well selected. He loved books ; books are cold but sure friends. As his growing fortune gave him more leisure, it seemed that he profited by it to cultivate his mind. Since he had been at M—— sur M——, it was remarked from year to year that his language became more polished, choicer, and more gentle.

In his walks he liked to carry a gun, though he seldom used it. When he did so, however, his aim was frightfully certain. He never killed an inoffensive animal, and never fired at any of the small birds.

Although he was no longer young, it was reported that he was of prodigious strength. He would offer a helping hand to any one who needed it, help up a fallen horse, push at a stalled wheel, or seize by the horns a bull that had broken loose. He always had his pockets full of money when he went out, and empty when he returned. When he passed through a village the ragged little youngsters would run after him with joy, and surround him like a swarm of flies.

It was surmised that he must have lived formerly in the country, for he had all sorts of useful secrets which he taught the peasants. He showed them how to destroy the grain-moth by sprinkling the granary and washing the cracks of the floor with a solution of common salt, and how to drive away the weevil by hanging up all about the ceiling and walls, in the pastures, and in the houses, the flowers of the orviot. He had recipes for clearing a field of rust, of vetches, of moles, of dog-grass, and all the parasitic herbs which live upon the grain. He defended a rabbit warren against rats, with nothing but the odour of a little Barbary pig that he placed there.

One day he saw some country people very busy pulling up nettles ; he looked at the heap of plants, uprooted, and already wilted, and said : " This is dead ; but it would be

well if we knew how to put it to some use. When the nettle is young, the leaves make excellent greens ; when it grows old it has filaments and fibres like hemp and flax. Cloth made from the nettle is worth as much as that made from hemp. Chopped up, the nettle is good for poultry ; pounded, it is good for horned cattle. The seed of the nettle mixed with the fodder of animals gives a lustre to their skin ; the root, mixed with salt, produces a beautiful yellow dye. It makes, moreover, excellent hay, as it can be cut twice in a season. And what does the nettle need ? very little soil, no care, no culture ; except that the seeds fall as fast as they ripen, and it is difficult to gather them ; that is all. If we would take a little pains, the nettle would be useful ; we neglect it, and it becomes harmful. Then we kill it. How much men are like the nettle !” After a short silence, he added : “ My friends remember this, that there are no bad herbs, and no bad men ; there are only bad cultivators.”

The children loved him yet more, because he knew how to make charming little playthings out of straw and cocoanuts.

When he saw the door of a church shrouded with black, he entered : he sought out a funeral as others seek out a christening. The bereavement and the misfortune of others attracted him, because of his great gentleness ; he mingled with friends who were in mourning, with families dressing in black, with the priests who were sighing around a corpse. With his eyes raised to heaven, he listened with a sort of aspiration towards all the mysteries of the infinite, to these sad voices, which sing upon the brink of the dark abyss of death.

He did a multitude of good deeds as secretly as bad ones are usually done. He would steal into houses in the evening, and furtively mount the stairs. A poor devil, on returning to his garret, would find that his door had been

opened, sometimes even forced, during his absence. The poor man would cry out: "Some thief has been here!" When he got in, the first thing he would see would be a piece of gold lying on the table. "The thief" who had been there, was Father Madeleine.

He was affable and sad. The people used to say: "There is a rich man who does not show pride. There is a fortunate man who does not appear contented."

Some pretended that he was a mysterious personage, and declared that no one ever went into his room, which was a true anchorite's cell furnished with hour-glasses, and enlivened with deaths'-heads and cross-bones. So much was said of this kind that some of the more mischievous of the elegant young ladies of M—— sur M—— called on him one day and said: "Monsieur Mayor, will you show us your room? We have heard that it is a grotto." He smiled, and introduced them on the spot to this "grotto." They were well punished for their curiosity. It was a room very well fitted up with mahogany furniture, ugly as all furniture of that kind is, and the walls covered with shilling paper. They could see nothing but two candlesticks of antique form that stood on the mantel, and appeared to be silver, "for they were marked," a remark full of the spirit of these little towns.

But none the less did it continue to be said that nobody ever went into that chamber, and that it was a hermit's cave, a place of dreams, a hole, a tomb.

It was also whispered that he had "immense" sums deposited with Laffitte, with the special condition that they were always at his immediate command, in such a way, it was added, that Monsieur Madeleine might arrive in the morning at Laffitte's, sign a receipt and carry away his two or three millions in ten minutes. In reality these "two or three millions" dwindled down, as we have said, to six hundred and thirty or forty thousand francs.

## IV.

## MONSIEUR MADELEINE IN MOURNING.

NEAR the beginning of the year 1821, the journals announced the decease of Monsieur Myriel, Bishop of D—, “surnamed *Monseigneur Bienvenu*,” who died in the odour of sanctity at the age of eighty-two years.

The Bishop of D—, to add an incident which the journals omitted, had been blind for several years before he died, and was content therewith, his sister being with him.

Let us say by the way, to be blind and to be loved, is in fact, on this earth where nothing is complete, one of the most strangely exquisite forms of happiness. To have continually at your side a woman, a girl, a sister, a charming being, who is there because you have need of her, and because she cannot do without you, to know you are indispensable to her who is necessary to you, to be able at all times to measure her affection by the amount of her company that she gives you, and to say to yourself: she consecrates to me all her time, because I possess her whole heart; to see the thought instead of the face; to be sure of the fidelity of one being in the eclipse of the world; to imagine the rustling of her dress the rustling of wings; to hear her moving to and fro, going out, coming in, talking, singing, and to think that you are the centre of those steps, of those words, of that song; to manifest at every minute your personal attraction; to feel yourself powerful by so much the more as you are the more infirm; to become in darkness, and by reason of darkness, the star around which this angel gravitates; few happy lots can equal that. The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves—say rather, loved in spite of ourselves; this conviction the blind have. In their cala-

mity, to be served, is to be caressed. Are they deprived of anything? No. Light is not lost where love enters. And what a love! a love wholly founded in purity. There is no blindness where there is certainty. The soul gropes in search of a soul, and finds it. And that soul, so found and proven, is a woman. A hand sustains you, it is hers; lips lightly touch your forehead, they are her lips; you hear one breathing near you, it is she. To have her wholly, from her devotion to her pity, never to be left, to have that sweet weakness which is your aid, to lean upon that unbending reed, to touch Providence with your hands and be able to grasp it in your arms; God made palpable, what transport! The heart, that dark but celestial flower, bursts into a mysterious bloom. You would not give that shade for all light! The angel-soul is there, for ever there; if she goes away, it is only to return; she fades away in dream and reappears in reality. You feel an approaching warmth, she is there. You overflow with serenity, gaiety, and ecstasy: you are radiant in your darkness. And the thousand little cares! The nothings which are enormous in this void. The most unspeakable accents of the womanly voice employed to soothe you, and making up to you the vanished universe! You are caressed through the soul. You see nothing, but you feel your self adored. It is a paradise of darkness.

From this paradise Monseigneur Bienvenu passed to the other.

The announcement of his death was reproduced in the local paper of M—— sur M——. Monsieur Madeleine appeared next morning dressed in black with crape on his hat.

This mourning was noticed and talked about all over the town. It appeared to throw some light upon the origin of Monsieur Madeleine. The conclusion was that he was in some way related to the venerable Bishop. “*He wears black*

*for the Bishop of D——,*" was the talk of the drawing-rooms ; it elevated Monsieur Madeleine very much, and gave him suddenly, and in a trice, marked consideration in the noble world of M—— sur M——. The microscopic Faubourg Saint Germain of the little place thought of raising the quarantine for Monsieur Madeleine, the probable relative of a bishop. Monsieur Madeleine perceived the advancement that he had obtained, by the greater reverence of the old ladies, and the more frequent smiles of the young ladies. One evening, one of the dowagers of that little great world, curious by right of age, ventured to ask him, "The Mayor is doubtless a relative of the late Bishop of D——?"

He said : "No, madame."

"But," the dowager persisted, "you wear mourning for him?"

He answered : "In my youth I was a servant in his family."

It was also remarked that whenever there passed through the city a young Savoyard who was tramping about the country in search of chimneys to sweep, the Mayor would send for him, ask his name and give him money. The little Savoyards told each other, and many of them passed that way.

## V.

### VAGUE FLASHES IN THE HORIZON.

LITTLE by little in the lapse of time all opposition had ceased. At first there had been, as always happens with those who rise by their own efforts, slanders and calumnies against Monsieur Madeleine, soon this was reduced to satire, then it was only wit, then it vanished entirely ; respect became complete, unanimous, cordial, and there came a moment, about 1821, when the words Monsieur the Mayor

were pronounced at M—— sur M—— with almost the same accent as the words Monseigneur the Bishop at D—— in 1815. People came from 30 miles around to consult Monsieur Madeleine. He settled differences, he prevented lawsuits, he reconciled enemies. Everybody, of his own will, chose him for judge. He seemed to have the book of the natural law by heart. A contagion of veneration had, in the course of six or seven years, step by step, spread over the whole country.

One man alone, in the city and its neighbourhood, held himself entirely clear from this contagion, and, whatever Father Madeleine did, he remained indifferent, as if a sort of instinct, unchangeable and imperturbable, kept him awake and on the watch. It would seem, indeed, that there is in certain men the veritable instinct of a beast, pure and complete like all instinct, which creates antipathies and sympathies, which separates one nature from another for ever, which never hesitates, never is perturbed, never keeps silent, and never admits itself to be in the wrong ; clear in its obscurity, infallible, imperious, refractory under all the counsels of intelligence, and all the solvents of reason, and which, whatever may be their destinies, secretly warns the dog-man of the presence of the cat-man, and the fox-man of the presence of the lion-man.

Often, when Monsieur Madeleine passed along the street, calm, affectionate, followed by the benedictions of all, it happened that a tall man, wearing a flat hat and an iron-grey coat, and armed with a stout cane, would turn around abruptly behind him, and follow him with his eyes until he disappeared, crossing his arms, slowly shaking his head, and pushing his upper with his under lip up to his nose, a sort of significant grimace which might be rendered by : “ But what is that man ? I am sure I have seen him somewhere. At all events, I at least am not his dupe.”

This personage, grave with an almost threatening gravity,

was one of those who, even in a hurried interview, command the attention of the observer.

His name was Javert, and he was one of the police.

He exercised at M—— sur M—— the unpleasant, but useful, function of Inspector. He was not there at the date of Madeleine's arrival. Javert owed his position to the protection of Monsieur Chabouillet, the secretary of the Minister of State, Count Anglès, then prefect of police at Paris. When Javert arrived at M—— sur M—— the fortune of the great manufacturer had been made already, and Father Madeleine had become Monsieur Madeleine.

Certain police officers have a peculiar physiognomy in which can be traced an air of meanness mingled with an air of authority. Javert had this physiognomy, without meanness.

It is our conviction that if souls were visible to the eye we should distinctly see this strange fact that each individual of the human species corresponds to some one of the species of the animal creation; and we should clearly recognize the truth, hardly perceived by thinkers, that, from the oyster to the eagle, from the swine to the tiger, all animals are in man, and that each of them is in a man; sometimes even, several of them at a time.

Animals are nothing but the forms of our virtues and vices, wandering before our eyes, the visible phantoms of our souls. God shows them to us to make us reflect. Only, as animals are but shadows, God has not made them capable of education in the complete sense of the word. Why should he? On the contrary, our souls being realities and having their peculiar end, God has given them intelligence, that is to say, the possibility of education. Social education, well attended to, can always draw out of a soul, whatever it may be, the usefulness that it contains.

Be this said, nevertheless, from the restricted point of view of the apparent earthly life, and without prejudice to

the deep question of the anterior or ulterior personality of the beings that are not man. The visible *me* in no way authorizes the thinker to deny the latent *me*. With this reservation, let us pass on.

Now, if we admit for a moment that there is in every man some one of the species of the animal creation, it will be easy for us to describe the guardian of the peace, Javert.

The peasants of the Asturias believe that in every litter of wolves there is one dog, which is killed by the mother, lest on growing up it should devour the other little ones.

Give a human face to this dog son of a wolf, and you will have Javert.

Javert was born in a prison. His mother was a fortuneteller whose husband was in the galleys. He grew up to think himself without the pale of society, and despaired of ever entering it. He noticed that society closed its doors, without pity, on two classes of men, those who attack it and those who guard it; he could choose between these two classes only: at the same time he felt that he had an indescribable basis of rectitude, order, and honesty, associated with an irrepressible hatred for that gypsy race to which he belonged. He entered the police. He succeeded. At forty he was an inspector.

In his youth he had been stationed in the galleys at the South.

Before going further, let us understand what we mean by the words human face, which we have just now applied to Javert.

The human face of Javert consisted of a snub nose, with two deep nostrils, which were bordered by large bushy whiskers that covered both his cheeks. One felt ill at ease the first time he saw those two forests and those two caverns. When Javert laughed, which was rarely and terribly, his thin lips parted, and showed not only his teeth, but his gums; and around his nose there was a wrinkle as broad and wild as

the muzzle of a fallow deer. Javert, when serious, was a bulldog ; when he laughed, he was a tiger. For the rest, a small head, large jaws, hair hiding the forehead and falling over the eyebrows, between the eyes of a permanent central frown, a gloomy look, a mouth pinched and frightful, and an air of fierce command.

This man was a compound of two sentiments, very simple and very good in themselves, but he almost made them evil by his exaggeration of them : respect for authority and hatred of rebellion : and in his eyes, theft, murder, all crimes, were only forms of rebellion. In his strong and implicit faith he included all who held any function in the State, from the Prime Minister to the constable. He had nothing but disdain, aversion, and disgust for all who had once overstepped the bounds of the law. He was absolute, and admitted no exceptions. On the one hand he said : “A public officer cannot be deceived ; a magistrate never does wrong ?” And on the other he said : “They are irremediably lost ; no good can come out of them.” He shared fully the opinion of those extremists who attribute to human laws an indescribable power of making, or, if you will, of determining, demons, and who place a Styx at the bottom of society. He was stoical, serious, austere ; a dreamer of stern dreams ; humble and haughty, like all fanatics. His stare was cold and as piercing as a gimblet. His whole life was contained in these two words : waking and watching. He marked out a straight path through the most tortuous thing in the world ; his conscience was bound up in his utility, his religion in his duties, and he was a spy as others are priests. Woe to him who should fall into his hands ! He would have arrested his father if escaping from the galleys, and denounced his mother for violating her ticket of leave. And he would have done it with that sort of interior satisfaction that springs from virtue. His life was a life of privations, isolation, self-denial, and chastity : never any amusement.

It was implacable duty, absorbed in the police as the Spartans were absorbed in Sparta, a pitiless detective, a fierce honesty, a marble-hearted informer, Brutus united with Vidocq.

The whole person of Javert expressed the spy and the informer. The mystic school of Joseph de Maistre, which at that time enlivened what were called the ultra journals with high-sounding cosmogonies, would have said that Javert was a symbol. You could not see his forehead which disappeared under his hat, you could not see his eyes which were lost under his brows, you could not see his chin which was buried in his cravat, you could not see his hands which were drawn up into his sleeves, you could not see his cane which he carried under his coat. But when the time came, you would see spring all at once out of this shadow, as from an ambush, a steep and narrow forehead, an ominous look, a threatening chin, enormous hands, and a monstrous club.

In his leisure moments, which were rare, although he hated books, he read ; wherefore he was not entirely illiterate. This was perceived also from a certain emphasis in his speech.

He was free from vice, we have said. When he was satisfied with himself, he allowed himself a pinch of snuff. That proved that he was human.

It will be easily understood that Javert was the terror of all that class which the annual statistics of the Minister of Justice include under the heading : *People without a fixed abode*. To speak the name of Javert would put all such to flight ; the face of Javert petrified them.

Such was this formidable man.

Javert was like an eye always fixed on Monsieur Madeleine ; an eye full of suspicion and conjecture. Monsieur Madeleine finally noticed it, but seemed to consider it of no consequence. He asked no question of Javert, he neither sought him nor shunned him, he endured this unpleasant

and annoying stare without appearing to pay any attention to it. He treated Javert as he did everybody else, at ease and with kindness.

From some words that Javert had dropped, it was guessed that he had secretly hunted up, with that curiosity which belongs to his race, and which is more a matter of instinct than of will, all the traces of his previous life which Father Madeleine had left elsewhere. He appeared to know, and he said sometimes in a covert way, that somebody had gathered certain information in a certain region about a certain missing family. Once he happened to say, speaking to himself: "I think I have got him!" Then for three days he remained moody without speaking a word. It appeared that the clue which he thought he had was broken.

But, and this is the necessary corrective to what the meaning of certain words may have presented in too absolute a sense, there can be nothing really infallible in a human creature, and the very peculiarity of instinct is that it can be disturbed, followed up, and routed. Were this not so it would be superior to intelligence, and the beast would be in possession of a purer light than man.

Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by the completely natural air and the tranquillity of Monsieur Madeleine.

One day, however, his strange manner appeared to make an impression upon Monsieur Madeleine. The occasion was this :

## VI.

### FATHER FAUCHELEVENT.

MONSIEUR MADELEINE was walking one morning along one of the unpaved alleys of M—— sur M——; he heard a shouting and saw a crowd at a little distance. He went to the spot. An old man named Father Fauchelevent, had fallen under his cart, his horse being thrown down.

This Fauchelevent was one of the few who were still enemies of Monsieur Madeleine at this time. When Madeleine arrived in the place, the business of Fauchelevent, who was a notary of long-standing, and very well-read for a rustic, was beginning to decline. Fauchelevent had seen this mere artisan grow rich, while he himself, a professional man, had been going to ruin. This had filled him with jealousy, and he had done what he could on all occasions to injure Madeleine. Then came bankruptcy, and the old man, having nothing but a horse and cart, as he was without family, and without children, was compelled to earn his living as a carman.

The horse had his thighs broken, and could not stir. The old man was caught between the wheels. Unluckily he had fallen so that the whole weight rested upon his breast. The cart was heavily loaded. Father Fauchelevent was uttering doleful groans. They had tried to pull him out, but in vain. An unlucky effort, inexpert help, a false push, might crush him. It was impossible to extricate him otherwise than by raising the waggon from beneath. Javert, who came up at the moment of the accident, had sent for a jack.

Monsieur Madeleine came. The crowd fell back with respect.

“Help,” cried old Fauchelevent. “Who is a good fellow to save an old man?”

Monsieur Madeleine turned towards the bystanders :

“Has anybody a jack?”

“They have gone for one,” replied a peasant.

“How soon will it be here?”

“We sent to the nearest place, to Flachot Place, where there is a blacksmith; but it will take a good quarter of an hour at least.”

“A quarter of an hour!” exclaimed Madeleine.

It had rained the night before, the road was soft, the cart was sinking deeper every moment, and pressing more and

more on the breast of the old carman. It was evident that in less than five minutes his ribs would be crushed.

"We cannot wait a quarter of an hour," said Madeleine to the peasants who were looking on.

"We must!"

"But it will be too late; don't you see that the waggon is sinking all the while?"

"It can't be helped."

"Listen," resumed Madeleine, "there is room enough still under the waggon for a man to crawl in, and lift it with his back. In half a minute we will have the poor man out. Is there nobody here who has strength and courage. Five louis'd'ors for him!"

Nobody stirred in the crowd.

"Ten louis," said Madeleine.

The bystanders dropped their eyes. One of them muttered: "He'd have to be devilish stout. And then he would risk getting crushed."

"Come," said Madeleine, "twenty louis."

The same silence.

"It is not willingness which they lack," said a voice.

Monsieur Madeleine turned and saw Javert. He had not noticed him when he came.

Javert continued :

"It is strength. He must be a terrible man who can raise a waggon like that on his back."

Then, looking fixedly at Monsieur Madeleine, he went on emphasizing every word that he uttered :

"Monsieur Madeleine, I have known but one man capable of doing what you call for."

Madeleine shuddered.

Javert added with an air of indifference, but without taking his eyes from Madeleine :

"He was a convict."

"Ah!" said Madeleine.

“In the galleys at Toulon.”

Madeleine became pale.

Meanwhile the cart was slowly settling down. Father Fauchelevent roared and screamed :

“I am dying ! my ribs are breaking ! a jack ! anything ! oh !”

Madeleine looked around him :

“Is there nobody, then, who wants to earn twenty louis, and save this poor old man’s life ?”

None of the bystanders moved. Javert resumed :

“I have known but one man who could take the place of a jack ; that was that convict.”

“Oh ! how it crushes me !” cried the old man.

Madeleine raised his head, met the falcon eye of Javert still fixed upon him, looked at the immovable peasants, and smiled sadly. Then, without saying a word, he fell on his knees, and even before the crowd had time to utter a cry, he was under the cart.

There was an awful moment of suspense and of silence.

Madeleine, lying almost flat under the fearful weight, was twice seen to try in vain to bring his elbows and knees nearer together. They cried out to him : “Father Madeleine ! come out from there !” Old Fauchelevent himself said : “Monsieur Madeleine ! go away ! I must die, you see that; leave me ! you will be crushed too.” Madeleine made no answer.

The bystanders held their breath. The wheels were still sinking, and it had now become almost impossible for Madeleine to extricate himself.

All at once the enormous mass started, the cart rose slowly, the wheels came half out of the ruts. A smothered voice was heard, crying : “Quick ! help !” It was Madeleine, who had just made a final effort.

They all rushed to the work. The devotion of one man had given strength and courage to all. The cart was lifted by twenty arms. Old Fauchelevent was safe.

Madeleine arose. He was very pale, though dripping with sweat. His clothes were torn and covered with mud. All wept. The old man kissed his knees and called him the good God. He himself wore on his face an indescribable expression of joyous and celestial suffering, and he looked with tranquil eye upon Javert, who was still watching him.

## VII.

## FAUCHELEVENT BECOMES A GARDENER AT PARIS.

FAUCHELEVENT had broken his knee-pan in his fall. Father Madeleine had him carried to an infirmary that he had established for his workmen in the same building with his factory, which was attended by two sisters of charity. The next morning the old man found a thousand-franc bill upon the stand by the side of the bed, with this note in the handwriting of Father Madeleine : *I have purchased your horse and cart.* The cart was broken and the horse was dead. Fauchelevent got well, but he had a stiff knee. Monsieur Madeleine, through the recommendations of the sisters and the curé, got the old man a place as gardener at a convent in the Quartier Saint Antoine, at Paris.

Some time afterwards Monsieur Madeleine was appointed mayor. The first time that Javert saw Monsieur Madeleine clothed with the scarf which gave him full authority over the city, he felt the same sort of shudder which a bull-dog would feel who should scent a wolf in his master's clothes. From that time he avoided him as much as he could. When the necessities of the service imperiously demanded it, and he could not do otherwise than come in contact with the Mayor, he spoke to him with profound respect.

The prosperity which Father Madeleine had created at M—— sur M——, in addition to the visible signs that we

have pointed out, had another symptom which, although not visible, was not the less significant. This never fails. When the population is suffering, when there is lack of work, when trade falls off, the tax-payer, constrained by poverty, resists taxation, exhausts and overruns the delays allowed by law, and the government is forced to incur large expenditures in the costs of levy and collection. When work is abundant, when the country is rich and happy, the tax is easily paid, and costs the state but little to collect. It may be said that poverty and public wealth have an infallible thermometer in the cost of the collection of the taxes. In seven years, the cost of the collection of the taxes had been reduced three quarters in the district of M—— sur M——, so that that district was frequently referred to especially by Monsieur de Villèle, then Minister of Finance.

Such was the situation of the country when Fantine returned. No one remembered her. Luckily the door of M. Madeleine's factory was like the face of a friend. She presented herself there, and was admitted into the workshop for women. The business was entirely new to Fantine, she could not be very expert in it, and consequently did not receive much for her day's work; but that little was enough, the problem was solved ; she was earning her living.

## VIII.

### MADAME VICTURNIEN SPENDS THIRTY FRANCS ON MORALITY.

WHEN Fantine realized how she was living, she had a moment of joy. To live honestly by her own labour ; what a heavenly boon ? The taste for labour returned to her, in truth. She bought a mirror, delighted herself with the sight of her youth, her fine hair and her fine teeth, forgot many things, thought of nothing save Cosette and the possibilities

of the future, and was almost happy. She hired a small room and furnished it on the credit of her future labour ; a remnant of her habits of disorder.

Not being able to say that she was married, she took good care, as we have already intimated, not to speak of her little girl.

At first, as we have seen, she paid the Thenardiers punctually. As she only knew how to sign her name she was obliged to write through a public letter-writer.

She wrote often ; that was noticed. They began to whisper in the women's workshop that Fantine "wrote letters," and that "she had airs." For prying into human affairs, none are equal to those whom it does not concern. "Why does this gentleman never come till dusk?" "Why does Mr. So-and-so never hang his key on the nail on Thursday?" "Why does he always take the by-streets?" "Why does madame always leave her carriage before getting to the house?" "Why does she send to buy a quire of writing-paper when she has her portfolio full of it?" &c. &c. There are persons who, to solve these enigmas, which are moreover perfectly immaterial to them, spend more money, waste more time, and give themselves more trouble than would suffice for ten good deeds ; and that gratuitously, and for the pleasure of it, without being paid for their curiosity in any other way than by curiosity. They will follow this man or that woman whole days, stand guard for hours at the corners of the street, under the entrance of a passage-way, at night, in the cold and in the rain, bribe messengers, get hack-drivers and lackeys drunk, see a chambermaid, or buy a porter. For what? for nothing. Pure craving to see, to know, and to find out. Pure itching for scandal. And often these secrets made known, these mysteries published, these enigmas brought into the light of day, lead to catastrophes, to duels, to failures, to the ruin of families, and make lives wretched, to the great joy of those who have

“discovered all” without any interest, and from pure instinct. A sad thing.

Some people are malicious from the mere necessity of talking. Their conversation, tattling in the drawing-room, gossip in the antechamber, is like those fireplaces that use up wood rapidly ; they need a great deal of fuel ; the fuel is their neighbour.

So Fantine was watched.

Beyond this, more than one was jealous of her fair hair and of her white teeth.

It was reported that in the shop, with all the rest about her, she often turned aside to wipe away a tear. Those were moments when she thought of her child ; perhaps also of the man whom she had loved.

It is a mournful task to break the sombre attachments of the past.

It was ascertained that she wrote, at least twice a month, and always to the same address, and that she prepaid the postage. They succeeded in learning the address : *Monsieur, Monsieur Thenardier, inn-keeper, Montfermeil.* The public letter-writer, a simple old fellow, who could not fill his stomach with red wine without emptying his pocket of his secrets, was made to reveal this at a drinking-house. In short, it became known that Fantine had a child. “She must be that sort of a woman.” And there was one old gossip who went to Montfermeil, talked with the Thenardiers, and said on her return : “For my thirty-five francs, I have found out all about it. I have seen the child !”

The busybody who did this was a beldame, called Madame Victurnien, keeper and guardian of everybody’s virtue. Madame Victurnien was fifty-six years old, and wore a mask of old age over her mask of ugliness. Her voice trembled, and she was capricious. It seemed strange, but this woman had been young. In her youth, in ’93, she married a monk who had escaped from the cloister in a red

cap, and passed from the Bernardines to the Jacobins. She was dry, rough, sour, sharp, crabbed, almost venomous ; never forgetting her monk, whose widow she was, and who had ruled and curbed her harshly. She was a nettle bruised by a frock. At the Restoration, she became a bigot, and so energetically, that the priests had pardoned her monk episode. She had a little property, which she had bequeathed to a religious community with great flourish. She was in very good standing at the Bishop's palace in Arras. This Madame Victurnien then went to Montfermeil, and returned saying : "I have seen the child."

All this took time ; Fantine had been more than a year at the factory, when one morning the overseer of the workshop handed her, on behalf of the Mayor, fifty francs, saying that she was no longer wanted in the shop, and enjoining her, on behalf of the Mayor, to leave the city.

This was the very same month in which the Thenardiers, after having asked twelve francs instead of six, had demanded fifteen francs instead of twelve.

Fantine was thunderstruck. She could not leave the city ; she was in debt for her lodging and her furniture. Fifty francs were not enough to clear off that debt. She faltered out some suppliant words. The overseer gave her to understand that she must leave the shop instantly. Fantine was moreover only a moderate worker. Overwhelmed with shame even more than with despair, she left the shop, and returned to her room. Her fault then was now known to all !

She felt no strength to say a word. She was advised to see the Mayor ; she dared not. The Mayor gave her fifty francs, because he was kind, and sent her away, because he was just. She bowed to that decree.

## IX.

## SUCCESS OF MADAME VICTURNIEN.

THE monk's widow was then good for something.

Monsieur Madeleine had known nothing of all this. These are combinations of events of which life is full. It was Monsieur Madeleine's habit scarcely ever to enter the women's workshop.

He had placed at the head of this shop an old spinster whom the curé had recommended to him, and he had entire confidence in this overseer, a very respectable person, firm, just, upright, full of that charity which consists in giving, but not having to the same extent that charity which consists in understanding and pardoning. Monsieur Madeleine left everything to her. The best men are often compelled to delegate their authority. It was in the exercise of this full power, and with the conviction that she was doing right, that the overseer had framed the indictment, tried, condemned, and executed Fantine.

As to the fifty francs, she had given them from a fund that Monsieur Madeleine had intrusted her with for alms-giving and aid to the work-women, and of which she rendered no account.

Fantine offered herself as a servant in the neighbourhood ; she went from one house to another. Nobody wanted her. She could not leave the city. The second-hand dealer to whom she was in debt for her furniture, and such furniture ! had said to her : "If you go away, I will have you arrested as a thief." The landlord, whom she owed for rent, had said to her : "You are young and pretty, you can pay." She divided the fifty francs between the landlord and the dealer,

returned to the latter three quarters of his goods, kept only what was necessary, and found herself without work, without position, having nothing but her bed, and owing still about a hundred francs.

She began to make coarse shirts for the soldiers of the garrison, and earned twelve sous a day. Her daughter cost her ten. It was at this time that she began to get behind-hand with the Thenardiers.

However, an old woman, who lit her candle for her when she came home at night, taught her the art of living in misery. Behind living on a little, lies the art of living on nothing. They are two rooms ; the first is obscure, the second is utterly dark.

Fantine learned how to do entirely without fire in winter, how to give up a bird that eats a farthing's worth of millet every other day, how to make a coverlid of her petticoat, and a petticoat of her coverlid, how to save her candle in taking her meals by the light of an opposite window. Few know how much certain feeble beings, who have grown old in privation and honesty, can extract from a sou. This finally becomes a talent. Fantine acquired this sublime talent and took heart a little.

During these times, she said to a neighbour : “ Bah ! I say to myself : by sleeping but five hours and working all the rest at my sewing, I shall always succeed in nearly earning bread. And then, when one is sad, one eats less. Well ! what with sufferings, troubles, a little bread on the one hand, anxiety on the other, all that will keep me alive.”

In this distress, to have had her little daughter would have been a strange happiness. She thought of having her come. But what ? to make her share her privation ? and then, she owed the Thenardiers ? How could she pay them ? and the journey ! how pay for that ?

The old woman, who had given her what might be called lessons in indigent life, was a pious woman, Marguerite by

name, a devotee of genuine devotion, poor, and charitable to the poor, and also to the rich, knowing how to write just enough to sign *Margeritte*, and believing in God, which is science.

There are many of these virtues in low places ; some day they will be on high. This life has a morrow.

At first, Fantine was so much ashamed that she did not dare to go out.

When she was in the street, she imagined that people turned behind her and pointed at her ; everybody looked at her and no one greeted her ; the sharp and cold disdain of the passers-by penetrated her, body and soul, like a north wind.

In small cities an unfortunate woman seems to be laid bare to the sarcasm and the curiosity of all. In Paris, at least, nobody knows you, and that obscurity is a covering. Oh ! how she longed to go to Paris ! impossible.

She must indeed become accustomed to disrespect as she had to poverty. Little by little she learned her part. After two or three months she shook off her shame and went out as if there were nothing in the way. "It is all one to me," said she.

She went and came, holding her head up and wearing a bitter smile, and felt that she was becoming shameless.

Madame Victurnien sometimes saw her pass her window, noticed the distress of "that creature," thanks to her "put back to her place," and congratulated herself. The malicious have a dark happiness.

Excessive work fatigued Fantine, and the slight dry cough, that she had, increased. She sometimes said to her neighbour, Marguerite, "just feel how hot my hands are."

In the morning, however, when with an old broken comb she combed her fine hair which flowed down in silky waves, she enjoyed a moment of happiness.

## X.

## RESULTS OF THE SUCCESS.

SHE had been discharged towards the end of the winter ; summer passed away, but winter returned. Short days, less work. In winter there is no heat, no light, no noon, evening touches morning, there is fog, and mist, the window is frosted, and you cannot see clearly. The sky is but the mouth of a cave. The whole day is the cave. The sun has the appearance of a pauper. Frightful season ! Winter changes into stone the water of heaven and the heart of man. Her creditors harassed her.

Fantine earned too little. Her debts had increased. The Thenardiers being poorly paid, were constantly writing letters to her, the contents of which disheartened her, while the postage was ruining her. One day they wrote to her that her little Cosette was entirely destitute of clothing for the cold weather, that she needed a woollen skirt, and that her mother must send at least ten francs for that. She received the letter and crushed it in her hand for a whole day. In the evening she went into a barber's shop at the corner of the street, and pulled out her comb. Her beautiful fair hair fell below her waist.

“What beautiful hair !” exclaimed the barber.

“How much will you give me for it ?” said she.

“Ten francs.”

“Cut it off.”

She bought a knit skirt and sent it to the Thenardiers.

This skirt made the Thenardiers furious. It was the money that they wanted. They gave the skirt to Eponine. The poor Lark still shivered.

Fantine thought : “My child is no longer cold, I have

clothed her with my hair." She put on a little round cap which concealed her shorn head, and with that she was still pretty.

A gloomy work was going on in Fantine's heart.

When she saw that she could no longer dress her hair, she began to look with hatred on all around her. She had long shared in the universal veneration for Father Madeleine; nevertheless, by dint of repeating to herself that it was he who had turned her away, and that he was the cause of her misfortunes, she came to hate him also, and especially. When she passed the factory at the hours in which the labourers were at the door, she forced herself to laugh and sing.

An old working-woman who saw her once singing and laughing in this way said: "There is a girl who will come to a bad end."

She took a lover, the first comer, a man whom she did not love, through bravado, and with rage in her heart. He was a wretch, a kind of mendicant musician, a lazy ragamuffin, who beat her, and who left her, as she had taken him, with disgust.

She worshipped her child.

The lower she sank, the more all became gloomy around her, the more the sweet little angel shone out in the bottom of her heart. She would say: "When I am rich, I shall have my Cosette with me;" and she laughed. The cough did not leave her, and she had night sweats.

One day she received from the Thenardiers a letter in these words: "Cosette is sick of an epidemic disease. A miliary fever they call it. The drugs necessary are dear. It is ruining us, and we can no longer pay for them. Unless you send us forty francs within a week the little one will die."

She burst out laughing, and said to her old neighbour: "Oh ! they are nice ! forty francs ! think of that ! that is

two napoleons ! Where do they think I can get them ? Are they fools, these boors ?”

She went, however, to the staircase, near a dormer window, and read the letter again.

Then she went down-stairs and out of doors, running and jumping, still laughing.

Somebody who met her said to her : “What is the matter with you, that you are so gay ?”

She answered : “A stupid joke that some country people have just written me. They ask me for forty francs ; the boors !”

As she passed through the Square, she saw many people gathered about an odd-looking carriage on the top of which stood a man in red clothes, declaiming. He was a juggler and a travelling dentist, and was offering to the public complete sets of teeth, opiates, powders, and elixirs.

Fantine joined the crowd and began to laugh with the rest at this harangue, in which were mingled slang for the rabble and jargon for the better sort. The puller of teeth saw this beautiful girl laughing, and suddenly called out : “ You have pretty teeth, you girl who are laughing there. If you will sell me your two incisors, I will give you a gold napoleon for each of them.”

“ What is that ? What are my incisors ?” asked Fantine.

“ The incisors,” resumed the professor of dentistry, “ are the front teeth, the two upper ones.”

“ How horrible !” cried Fantine.

“ Two napoleons !” grumbled a toothless old hag who stood by. “ How lucky she is !”

Fantine fled away and stopped her ears not to hear the shrill voice of the man who called after her : “ Consider, my beauty ! two napoleons ! how much good they will do you ! If you have the courage for it, come this evening to the inn of the *Tillac d'Argent*; you will find me there.”

Fantine returned home ; she was raving, and told the

story to her good neighbour Marguerite : "Do you understand that? isn't he an abominable man? Why do they let such people go about the country? Pull out my two front teeth! why, I should be horrible! The hair is bad enough, but the teeth! Oh! what a monster of a man! I would rather throw myself from the fifth story, head first, to the pavement! He told me that he would be this evening at the *Tillac d'Argent*."

"And what was it he offered you?" asked Marguerite.

"Two napoleons."

"That is forty francs."

"Yes," said Fantine, "that makes forty francs."

She became thoughtful and went about her work. In a quarter of an hour she left her sewing and went to the stairs to read again the Thenardiers' letter.

On her return she said to Marguerite, who was at work near her :

"What does this mean, a miliary fever? Do you know?"

"Yes," answered the old woman, "it is a disease."

"Then it needs a good many drugs?"

"Yes; terrible drugs."

"How does it come upon you?"

"It is a disease that comes in a moment."

"Does it attack children?"

"Children especially."

"Do people die of it?"

"Very often," said Marguerite.

Fantine withdrew and went once more to read over the letter on the stairs.

In the evening she went out, and took the direction of the Rue de Paris where the inns are.

The next morning, when Marguerite went into Fantine's chamber before daybreak, for they always worked together, and so made one candle do for the two, she found Fantine seated upon her couch, pale and icy. She had not been in

bed. Her cap had fallen upon her knees. The candle had burned all night, and was almost consumed.

Marguerite stopped upon the threshold, petrified by this wild disorder, and exclaimed : “Good Lord! the candle is all burned out. Something has happened.”

Then she looked at Fantine, who sadly turned her shorn head.

Fantine had grown ten years older since evening.

“Bless us!” said Marguerite, “what is the matter with you, Fantine?”

“Nothing,” said Fantine. “Quite the contrary. My child will not die with that frightful sickness for lack of aid. I am satisfied.”

So saying, she showed the old woman two napoleons that glistened on the table.

“Oh ! good God !” said Marguerite. “Why there is a fortune ! where did you get these louis d’or ?”

“I got them,” answered Fantine.

At the same time she smiled. The candle lit up her face. It was a sickening smile, for the corners of her mouth were stained with blood, and a dark cavity revealed itself there.

The two teeth were gone.

She sent the forty francs to Montfermeil.

And this was a ruse of the Thenardiers to get money. Cosette was not sick.

Fantine threw her looking-glass out of the window. Long before she had left her little room on the second story for an attic room with no other fastening than a latch ; one of those garret rooms the ceiling of which makes an angle with the floor and hits your head at every moment. The poor cannot go to the end of their chamber or to the end of their destiny, but by bending continually more and more. She no longer had a bed, she retained a rag that she called her coverlid, a mattress on the floor, and a worn out straw

chair. Her little rose-bush was dried up in the corner, forgotten. In the other corner was a butter-pot for water, which froze in the winter, and the different levels at which the water had stood remained marked a long time by circles of ice. She had lost her modesty, she was losing her coquetry. The last sign. She would go out with a dirty cap. Either from want of time or from indifference she no longer washed her linen. As fast as the heels of her stockings wore out she drew them down into her shoes. This was shown by certain perpendicular wrinkles. She mended her old, wornout corsets with bits of calico which were torn by the slightest motion. Her creditors quarrelled with her, and gave her no rest. She met them in the street, she met them again on her stairs. She passed whole nights in weeping and thinking. She had a strange brilliancy in her eyes, and a constant pain in her shoulder near the top of her left shoulder-blade. She coughed a great deal. She hated Father Madeleine thoroughly, and never complained. She sewed seventeen hours a day ; but a prison contractor, who was working prisoners at a loss, suddenly cut down the price, and this reduced the day's wages of free labourers to nine sous. Seventeen hours of work, and nine sous a day ! Her creditors were more pitiless than ever. The second-hand dealer, who had taken back nearly all his furniture, was constantly saying to her : "When will you pay me, wench?"

Good God ! what did they want her to do ? She felt herself hunted down, and something of the wild beast began to develop within her. About the same time, Thenardier wrote to her that really he had waited with too much generosity, and that he must have a hundred francs immediately, or else little Cosette, just convalescing after her severe sickness, would be turned out of doors into the cold and upon the highway, and that she would become what she could, and would perish if she must. "A hundred

francs," thought Fantine. "But where is there a place, where one can earn a hundred sous a day?"

"Come!" said she, "I will sell what is left."

The unfortunate creature became a woman of the town.

## XI.

### CHRISTUS NOS LIBERAVIT.

WHAT is this history of Fantine? It is society buying a slave.

From whom? From misery.

From hunger, from cold, from loneliness, from abandonment, from privation. Melancholy barter. A soul for a bit of bread. Misery makes the offer, society accepts.

The holy law of Jesus Christ governs our civilization, but it does not yet permeate it; it is said that slavery has disappeared from European civilization. That is a mistake. It still exists; but it weighs now only upon woman, and it is called prostitution.

It weighs upon woman, that is to say, upon grace, upon feebleness, upon beauty, upon maternity. This is not one of the least of man's shames.

At the stage of this mournful drama at which we have now arrived, Fantine has nothing left of what she had formerly been. She has become marble in becoming corrupted. Whoever touches her feels a chill. She goes her ways, she endures you and she knows you not; she wears a dishonoured and severe face. Life and social order have spoken their last word to her. All that can happen to her has happened. She has endured all, borne all, experienced all, suffered all, lost all, wept for all. She is resigned, with that resignation that resembles indifference as death resembles sleep. She shuns nothing now. She fears nothing

now. Every cloud falls upon her, and all the ocean sweeps over her ! What matters it to her ! the sponge is already drenched.

She believed so at least, but it is a mistake to imagine that man can exhaust his destiny, or can reach the bottom of anything whatever.

Alas ! what are all these destinies thus driven pell-mell ? whither go they ? why are they so ?

He who knows that, sees all the shadow.

He is alone. His name is God.

## XII

### THE IDLENESS OF MONSIEUR BAMATABOIS.

THERE is in all small cities, and there was at M—— sur M—— in particular, a set of young men who nibble their fifteen hundred livres of income in the country with the same air with which their fellows devour two hundred thousand francs a year at Paris. They are beings of the great neuter species ; geldings, parasites, nobodies, who have a little land, a little folly, and a little wit, who would be clowns in a drawing-room, and think themselves gentlemen in a bar-room, who talk about "my fields, my woods, my peasants," hiss the actresses at the theatre to prove that they are persons of taste, quarrel with the officers of the garrison to show that they are gallant, hunt, smoke, gape, drink, take snuff, play billiards, stare at passengers getting out of the coach, live at the café, dine at the inn, have a dog who eats the bones under the table, and a mistress who sets the dishes upon it, hold fast to a sou, overdo the fashions, admire tragedy, despise women, wear out their old boots, copy London as reflected from Paris, and Paris as reflected from Pont-à-Mousson, grow stupid as they grow old, do no work, do no good, and not much harm.

Monsieur Felix Tholomyès, had he remained in his province and never seen Paris, would have been such a man.

If they were richer, we should say : they are dandies ; if they were poorer, we should say : they are vagabonds. They are simply idlers. Among these idlers there are some that are bores, some that are bored, some dreamers, and some jokers.

In those days, a dandy was made up of a large collar, a large cravat, a watch loaded with chains, three waistcoats worn one over the other, of different colours, the red and the blue within, a short olive-coloured coat with a fish-tail skirt, a double row of silver buttons alternating with one another and running up to the shoulder, and pantaloons of a lighter olive, ornamented at the two seams with an indefinite, but always odd, number of ribs, varying from one to eleven, a limit which was never exceeded. Add to this, Blucher boots with little iron caps on the heel, a high-crowned and narrow-brimmed hat, hair bushed out, an enormous cane, and conversation spiced with the puns of Potier. Above all, spurs and moustaches. In those days, moustaches meant civilians, and spurs meant pedestrians.

The provincial dandy wore longer spurs and fiercer moustaches.

It was the time of the war of the South American Republics against the King of Spain, of Bolivar against Morillo. Hats with narrow brims were royalist, and were called Morillos ; the liberals wore hats with wide brims, which were called Bolivars.

Eight or ten months after what has been related in the preceding pages, in the early part of January, 1823, one evening when it had been snowing, one of these dandies, one of these idlers, a “well-intentioned” man, for he wore a morillo, very warmly wrapped in one of those large cloaks which completed the fashionable costume in cold weather, was amusing himself with tormenting a creature who was

walking back and forth before the window of the officers' café, in a ball-dress, with her neck and shoulders bare, and flowers upon her head. The dandy was smoking, for that was decidedly the fashion.

Every time that the woman passed before him, he threw out at her, with a puff of smoke from his cigar, some remark which he thought was witty and pleasant, as: "How ugly you are!" "Are you trying to hide?" "You have lost your teeth;" etc., etc. This gentleman's name was Monsieur Bamatabois. The woman, a rueful, bedizened spectre, who was walking backwards and forwards upon the snow, did not answer him, did not even look at him, but continued her walk in silence and with a dismal regularity that brought her under his sarcasm every five minutes, like the condemned soldier who at stated periods returns under the rods. This failure to secure attention doubtless piqued the loafer, who, taking advantage of the moment when she turned, came up behind her with a stealthy step and stifling his laughter, stooped down, seized a handful of snow from the sidewalk, and threw it hastily into her back between her naked shoulders. The girl roared with rage, turned, bounded like a panther, and rushed upon the man, burying her nails in his face, and using the most frightful words that ever fell from the off-scouring of a guard-house. These insults were thrown out in a voice roughened by brandy, from a hideous mouth which lacked the two front teeth. It was Fantine.

At the noise which this made, the officers came out of the café, a crowd gathered, and a large circle was formed, laughing, jeering, and applauding, around this centre of attraction composed of two beings who could hardly be recognized as a man and a woman, the man defending himself, his hat knocked off, the woman kicking and striking, her head bare, shrieking, toothless, and without hair, livid with wrath, and horrible.

Suddenly a tall man advanced quickly from the crowd,

seized the woman by her muddy satin waist, and said : “follow me ;”

The woman raised her head ; her furious voice died out at once. Her eyes were glassy, from livid she had become pale, and she shuddered with a shudder of terror. She recognized Javert.

The dandy profited by this to steal away.

### XIII.

#### SOLUTION OF SOME QUESTIONS OF MUNICIPAL POLICE.

JAVERT dismissed the bystanders, broke up the circle, and walked off rapidly towards the Bureau of Police, which is at the end of the Square, dragging the poor creature after him. She made no resistance, but followed mechanically. Neither spoke a word. The flock of spectators, in a paroxysm of joy, followed with their jokes. The deepest misery, an opportunity for obscenity.

When they reached the Bureau of Police, which was a low hall warmed by a stove, and guarded by a sentinel, with a grated window looking on the street, Javert opened the door, entered with Fantine, and closed the door behind him, to the great disappointment of the curious crowd who stood upon tiptoe and stretched their necks before the dirty window of the guard-house, in their endeavours to see. Curiosity is a kind of glutton. To see is to devour.

On entering Fantine crouched down in a corner motionless and silent, like a frightened dog.

The sergeant of the guard placed a lighted candle on the table. Javert sat down, drew from his pocket a sheet of stamped paper, and began to write. These women are placed by our laws completely under the discretion of the police. They do what they will with them, punish them as they please, and confiscate at will those two sad things

which they call their industry and their liberty. Javert was impassible ; his grave face betrayed no emotion. He was, however, engaged in serious and earnest consideration. It was one of those moments in which he exercised without restraint, but with all the scruples of a strict conscience, his formidable discretionary power. At this moment he felt that his policeman's stool was a bench of justice. He was conducting a trial. He was trying and condemning. He called all the ideas of which his mind was capable around the grand thing that he was doing. The more he examined the conduct of this girl, the more he revolted at it. It was clear that he had seen a crime committed. He had seen, there in the street, society represented by a property holder and an elector, insulted and attacked by a creature who was an outlaw and an outcast. A prostitute had assaulted a citizen. He, Javert, had seen that himself. He wrote in silence.

When he had finished, he signed his name, folded the paper, and handed it to the sergeant of the guard, saying : "Take three men, and carry this girl to jail." Then turning to Fantine : "You are in for six months."

The hapless woman shuddered.

"Six months ! six months in prison !" cried she. "Six months to earn seven sous a day ! but what will become of Cosette ! my daughter ! my daughter ! Why, I still owe more than a hundred francs to the Thenardiers, Monsieur Inspector, do you know that ?"

She dragged herself along on the floor, dirtied by the muddy boots of all these men, without rising, clasping her hands, and moving rapidly on her knees.

"Monsieur Javert," said she, "I beg your pity. I assure you that I was not in the wrong. If you had seen the beginning, you would have seen. I swear to you by the good God that I was not in the wrong. That gentleman, whom I do not know, threw snow in my back. Have they the

right to throw snow into our backs when we are going along quietly like that without doing any harm to anybody? That made me wild. I am not very well, you see! and then he had already been saying things to me for some time. ‘You are homely!’ ‘You have no teeth!’ I know too well that I have lost my teeth. I did not do anything; I thought: ‘He is a gentleman who is amusing himself.’ I was not immodest with him, I did not speak to him. It was then that he threw the snow at me. Monsieur Javert, my good Monsieur Inspector! was there no one there who saw it and can tell you that this is true? I perhaps did wrong to get angry. You know, at the first moment, we cannot master ourselves. We are excitable. And then, to have something so cold thrown into your back when you are not expecting it. I did wrong to spoil the gentleman’s hat. Why has he gone away? I would ask his pardon. Oh! I would beg his pardon. Have pity on me now this once, Monsieur Javert. Stop, you don’t know how it is, in the prisons they only earn seven sous; that is not the fault of the government, but they earn seven sous, and just think that I have a hundred francs to pay, or else they will turn away my little one. O my God! I cannot have her with me. What I do is so vile! O my Cosette, O my little angel of the good, blessed Virgin, what will she become, poor famished child! I tell you the Thenardiers are inn-keepers, boors, they have no consideration. They must have money. Do not put me in prison! Do you see, she is a little one that they will put out on the highway, to do what she can, in the very heart of winter; you must feel pity for such a thing, good Monsieur Javert. If she were older, she could earn her living, but she cannot at such an age. I am not a bad woman at heart. It is not laziness and waste that have brought me to this. I have drunk brandy, but it was from misery. I do not like it, but it stupifies. When I was happier, one would only have had to look into my wardrobe

to see that I was not a disorderly woman. I had linen, much linen. Have pity on me, Monsieur Javert."

She talked thus, bent double, shaken with sobs, blinded by tears, her neck bare, clenching her hands, coughing with a dry and short cough, stammering very feebly with an agonized voice. Great grief is a divine and terrible radiance which transfigures the wretched. At that moment Fantine had again become beautiful. At certain instants she stopped and tenderly kissed the policeman's coat. She would have softened a heart of granite; but you cannot soften a heart of wood.

"Come," said Javert, "I have heard you. Haven't you got through? March off at once! you have your six months! the Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you."

At those solemn words, *The Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you*, she understood that her sentence was fixed. She sank down murmuring :

"Mercy!"

Javert turned his back.

The soldiers seized her by the arms.

A few minutes before a man had entered without being noticed. He had closed the door, and stood with his back against it, and heard the despairing supplication of Fantine.

When the soldiers put their hands upon the wretched being, who would not rise, he stepped forward out of the shadow and said :

"One moment, if you please!"

Javert raised his eyes and recognized Monsieur Madeleine. He took off his hat, and bowing with a sort of angry awkwardness :

"Pardon, Monsieur Mayor—"

This word, Monsieur Mayor, had a strange effect upon Fantine. She sprang to her feet at once like a spectre rising from the ground, pushed back the soldiers with her arms, walked straight to Monsieur Madeleine before they

could stop her, and gazing at him fixedly, with a wild look, she exclaimed :

“ Ah ! it is you then who are Monsieur Mayor ! ”

Then she burst out laughing and spat in his face.

Monsieur Madeleine wiped his face and said :

“ Inspector Javert, set this woman at liberty.”

Javert felt as though he were on the point of losing his senses. He experienced, at that moment, blow on blow, and almost simultaneously, the most violent emotions that he had known in his life. To see a woman of the town spit in the face of a mayor, was a thing so monstrous that in his most daring suppositions he would have thought it sacrilege to believe it possible. On the other hand, deep down in his thought, he dimly brought into hideous association what this woman was and what this mayor might be, and then he perceived with horror something indescribably simple in this prodigious assault. But when he saw this mayor, this magistrate, wipe his face quietly and say : *set this woman at liberty*, he was stupefied with amazement ; thought and speech alike failed him ; the sum of possible astonishment had been overpassed. He remained speechless.

The Mayor’s words were not less strange a blow to Fantine. She raised her bare arm and clung to the damper of the stove as if she were staggered. Meanwhile she looked all around and began to talk in a low voice, as if speaking to herself :

“ At liberty ! they let me go ! I am not to go to prison for six months ! Who was it said that ? It is not possible that anybody said that. I misunderstood. That cannot be this monster of a mayor ! Was it you, my good Monsieur Javert, who told them to set me at liberty ? Oh ! look now ! I will tell you and you will let me go. This monster of a mayor, this old whelp of a mayor, he is the cause of all this. Think of it, Monsieur Javert, he turned me away on account of a parcel of beggars who told stories in the work-

shop. Was not that horrible? To turn away a poor girl who does her work honestly! Since that I could not earn enough, and all the wretchedness has come. To begin with, there is a change that you gentlemen of the police ought to make—that is, to stop prison contractors from wronging poor people. I will tell you how it is. You earn twelve sous at shirt making, that falls to nine sous, not enough to live. Then we must do what we can. For me, I had my little Cosette, and I had to be a bad woman. You see now that it is this beggar of a mayor who has done all this, and then, I did stamp on the hat of this gentleman in front of the officers' café. But he, he had spoiled my whole dress with the snow. We women, we have only one silk dress for evening. See, you, I have never meant to do wrong, in truth, Monsieur Javert, and I see everywhere much worse women than I am who are much more fortunate. Oh, Monsieur Javert, it is you who said that they must let me go, is it not? Go and inquire, speak to my landlord; I pay my rent, and he will surely tell you that I am honest. Oh dear, I beg your pardon, I have touched—I did not know it—the damper of the stove, and it smokes."

Monsieur Madeline listened with profound attention. While she was talking, he had fumbled in his waistcoat, had taken out his purse and opened it. It was empty. He had put it back into his pocket. He said to Fantine :

"How much did you say that you owed?"

Fantine, who had only looked at Javert, turned towards him :

"Who said anything to you?"

Then addressing herself to the soldiers :

"Say now, did you see how I spit in his face? Oh! you old scoundrel of a mayor, you come here to frighten me, but I am not afraid of you. I am afraid of Monsieur Javert, I am afraid of my good Monsieur Javert!"

As she said this she turned again towards the inspector

“Now, you see, Monsieur Inspector, you must be just. I know that you are just, Monsieur Inspector ; in fact it is very simple, a man who jocosely throws a little snow into a woman’s back, that makes them laugh, the officers, they must divert themselves with something, and we poor things are only for their amusement. And then, you, you come, you are obliged to keep order, you arrest the woman who has done wrong, but on reflection, as you are good, you tell them to set me at liberty, that is for my little one, because six months in prison, that would prevent my supporting my child. Only never come back again, wretch ! Oh ! I will never come back again Monsieur Javert ! They may do any thing they like with me now, I will not stir. Only, to-day, you see, I cried out because that hurt me. I did not in the least expect that snow from that gentleman, and then, I have told you, I am not very well, I cough, I have something in my chest like a ball which burns me, and the doctor tells me ‘be careful.’ Stop, feel, give me your hand, don’t be afraid, here it is.”

She wept no more ; her voice was caressing ; she placed Javert’s great coarse hand upon her white and delicate chest, and looked at him smiling.

Suddenly she hastily adjusted the disorder of her garments, smoothed down the folds of her dress, which, in dragging herself about, had been raised almost as high as her knees, and walked towards the door, saying in an undertone to the soldiers, with a friendly nod of the head :

“Boys, Monsieur the Inspector said that you must release me ; I am going.”

She put her hand upon the latch. One more step and she would be in the street.

Javert until that moment had remained standing, motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground, looking, in the midst of the scene, like a statue which was waiting to be placed in position.

The sound of the latch roused him. He raised his head with an expression of sovereign authority, an expression always the more frightful in proportion as power is vested in beings of lower grade; ferocious in the wild beast, atrocious in the undeveloped man.

"Sergeant," exclaimed he, "don't you see that this vagabond is going off? Who told you to let her go?"

"I," said Madeleine.

At the words of Javert, Fantine had trembled and dropped the latch, as a thief, who is caught, drops what he has stolen. When Madeleine spoke, she turned, and from that moment, without saying a word, without even daring to breathe, freely, she looked by turns from Madeleine to Javert and from Javert to Madeleine, as the one or the other was speaking.

It was clear that Javert must have been, as they say, "thrown off his balance," or he would not have allowed himself to address the sergeant as he did, after the direction of the Mayor to set Fantine at liberty. Had he forgotten the presence of the Mayor? Had he finally decided within himself that it was impossible for "an authority" to give such an order, and that very certainly the Mayor must have said one thing when he meant another? Or, in view of the enormities which he had witnessed for the last two hours, did he say to himself that it was necessary to revert to extreme measures, that it was necessary for the little to make itself great, for the detective to transform himself into a magistrate, for the policeman to become a judge, and that in this fearful extremity, order, law, morality, government, society as a whole, were personified in him, Javert?

However this might be, when Monsieur Madeleine pronounced that *I* which we have just heard, the Inspector of Police, Javert, turned towards the Mayor, pale, cold, with blue lips, a desperate look, his whole body agitated with an imperceptible tremor, and an unheard-of thing, said to him, with a downcast look, but a firm voice :

“Monsieur Mayor, that cannot be done.”

“Why?” said Monsieur Madeleine.

“This wretched woman has insulted a citizen.”

“Inspector Javert,” replied Monsieur Madeleine, in a conciliating and calm tone, “listen. You are an honest man, and I have no objection to explain myself to you. The truth is this. I was passing through the Square when you arrested this woman; there was a crowd still there; I learned the circumstances; I know all about it; it is the citizen who was in the wrong, and who, by a faithful police, would have been arrested.”

Javert went on :

“This wretch has just insulted Monsieur the Mayor.”

“That concerns me,” said Monsieur Madeleine. “The insult to me rests with myself, perhaps. I can do what I please about it.”

“I beg Monsieur the Mayor’s pardon. The insult rests not with him, it rests with justice.”

“Inspector Javert,” replied Monsieur Madeleine, “the highest justice is conscience. I have heard this woman. I know what I am doing.”

“And for my part, Monsieur Mayor, I do not know what I am seeing.”

“Then content yourself with obeying.”

“I obey my duty. My duty requires that this woman spend six months in prison.”

Monsieur Madeleine answered mildly :

“Listen to this. She shall not a day.”

At these decisive words, Javert had the boldness to look the Mayor in the eye, and said, but still in a tone of profound respect :

“I am very sorry to resist Monsieur the Mayor; it is the first time in my life, but he will deign to permit me to observe that I am within the limits of my own authority. I will speak, since the Mayor desires it, on the matter of the

citizen. I was there. This girl fell upon Monsieur Bamatbois, who is an elector and the owner of that fine house with a balcony, that stands at the corner of the esplanade, three stories high, and all of hewn stone. Indeed, there are some things in this world, which must be considered. However that may be, Monsieur Mayor, this matter belongs to the police of the street; that concerns me, and I detain the woman Fantine."

At this Monsieur Madeleine folded his arms and said in a severe tone which nobody in the city had ever yet heard:

"The matter of which you speak belongs to the municipal police. By the terms of articles nine, eleven, fifteen, and sixty-six of the code of criminal law, I am the judge of it. I order that this woman be set at liberty."

Javert endeavoured to make a last attempt.

"But, Monsieur Mayor——"

"I refer you to article eighty-one of the law of December 13th, 1799, upon illegal imprisonment."

"Monsieur Mayor, permit——"

"Not another word."

"However——"

"Retire," said Monsieur Madeleine.

Javert received the blow, standing in front, and with open breast like a Russian soldier. He bowed to the ground before the Mayor, and went out.

Fantine stood by the door and looked at him with stupor as he passed before her.

Meanwhile she also was the subject of a strange revolution. She had seen herself somehow disputed about by two opposing powers. She had seen struggling before her very eyes two men who held in their hands her liberty, her life, her soul, her child; one of these men was drawing her to the side of darkness, the other was leading her towards the light. In this contest, seen with distortion through the magnifying power of fright, these two men had appeared to

her like two giants ; one spoke as her demon, the other as her good angel. The angel had vanquished the demon, and the thought of it made her shudder from head to foot ; this angel, this deliverer, was precisely the man whom she abhorred, this Mayor whom she had so long considered as the author of all her woes, this Madeleine ! and at the very moment when she had insulted him in a hideous fashion, he had saved her ! Had she then been deceived ? Ought she then to change her whole heart ? She did not know, she trembled. She listened with dismay, she looked around with alarm, and at each word that Monsieur Madeleine uttered, she felt the fearful darkness of her hatred melt within and flow away, while there was born in her heart an indescribable and unspeakable warmth of joy, of confidence, and of love.

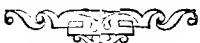
When Javert was gone, Monsieur Madeleine turned towards her, and said to her, speaking slowly and with difficulty, like a man who is struggling that he may not weep :

“ I have heard you. I knew nothing of what you have said. I believe that it is true. I did not even know that you had left my workshop. Why did you not apply to me ? But now : I will pay your debts, I will have your child come to you, or you shall go to her. You shall live here, at Paris, or where you will. I take charge of your child and you. You shall do no more work, if you do not wish to. I will give you all the money that you need. You shall again become honest in again becoming happy. More than that, listen. I declare to you from this moment, if all is as you say, and I do not doubt it, that you have never ceased to be virtuous and holy before God. Oh, poor woman ! ”

This was more than poor Fantine could bear. To have Cosette ! to leave this infamous life ! to live free, rich, happy, honest, with Cosette ! to see suddenly spring up in

the midst of her misery all these realities of paradise ! She looked as if she were stupefied at the man who was speaking to her, and could only pour out two or three sobs : "Oh! oh ! oh !" Her limbs gave way, she threw herself on her knees before Monsieur Madeleine, and, before he could prevent it, he felt that she had seized his hand and carried it to her lips.

Then she fainted.





## Book Sixth

### J A V E R T

#### I.

##### THE BEGINNING OF THE REST.

MONSIEUR MADELEINE had Fantine taken to the Infirmary, which was in his own house. He confided her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A violent fever came on, and she passed a part of the night in delirious ravings. Finally, she fell asleep.

Towards noon the following day, Fantine awoke. She heard a breathing near her bed, drew aside the curtain, and saw Monsieur Madeleine standing gazing at something above his head. His look was full of compassionate and supplicating agony. She followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed upon a crucifix nailed against the wall.

From that moment Monsieur Madeleine was transfigured in the eyes of Fantine; he seemed to her clothed upon with light. He was absorbed in a kind of prayer. She gazed at him for a long while without daring to interrupt him; at last she said timidly:

“What are you doing?”

Monsieur Madeleine had been in that place for an hour waiting for Fantine to awake. He took her hand, felt her pulse, and said :

“ How do you feel ? ”

“ Very well. I have slept,” she said. “ I think I am getting better—this will be nothing.”

Then he said, answering the question she had first asked him, as if she had just asked it :

“ I was praying to the martyr who is on high.”

And in his thought he added : “ For the martyr who is here below.”

Monsieur Madeleine had passed the night and morning in informing himself about Fantine. He knew all now, he had learned, even in all its poignant details, the history of Fantine.

He went on :

“ You have suffered greatly, poor mother. Oh ! do not lament, you have now the portion of the elect. It is in this way that mortals become angels. It is not their fault ; they do not know how to set about it otherwise. This hell from which you have come out is the first step towards Heaven. We must begin by that.”

He sighed deeply ; but she smiled with this sublime smile from which two teeth were gone.

That same night, Javert wrote a letter. Next morning he carried this letter himself to the Post-office of M—— sur M——. It was directed to Paris and bore this address : “ To Monsieur Chabouillet, Secretary of Monsieur the Prefect of Police.”

As the affair of the Bureau of Police had been noised about, the Postmistress and some others who saw the letter before it was sent, and who recognised Javert’s handwriting in the address, thought he was sending in his resignation. Monsieur Madeleine wrote immediately to the Thenardiers. Fantine owed them a hundred and twenty francs. He sent

them three hundred francs, telling them to pay themselves out of it, and bring the child at once to M—— sur M——, where her mother, who was sick, wanted her.

This astonished Thenardier.

“The devil!” he said to his wife, “we won’t let go of the child. It may be that this Lark will become a milch cow. I guess some silly fellow has been smitten by the mother.”

He replied by a bill of five hundred and some odd francs carefully drawn up. In this bill figured two incontestable items for upwards of three hundred francs, one of a physician and the other of an apothecary who had attended and supplied Eponine and Azelma during two long illnesses. Cosette, as we have said, had not been ill. This was only a slight substitution of names. Thenardier wrote at the bottom of the bill: “*Received on account three hundred francs.*”

Monsieur Madeleine immediately sent three hundred francs more, and wrote: “Make haste to bring Cosette.”

“Christy!” said Thenardier, “we won’t let go of the girl.”

Meanwhile Fantine had not recovered. She still remained in the infirmary.

It was not without some repugnance, at first, that the sisters received and cared for “this girl.” He who has seen the bas-reliefs at Rheims will recall the distension of the lower lip of the wise virgins beholding the foolish virgins. This ancient contempt of vestals for less fortunate women is one of the deepest instincts of womanly dignity; the sisters had experienced it with the intensification of Religion. But in a few days Fantine had disarmed them. The motherly tenderness within her, with her soft and touching words, moved them. One day the sisters heard her say in her delirium: “I have been a sinner, but when I shall have my child with me, that will mean that God has pardoned

me. While I was bad I would not have had my Cosette with me ; I could not have borne her sad and surprised looks. It was for her I sinned, and that is why God forgives me. I shall feel this benediction when Cosette comes. I shall gaze upon her ; the sight of her innocence will do me good. She knows nothing of it all. She is an angel, you see, my Sisters. At her age the wings have not yet fallen."

Monsieur Madeleine came to see her twice a day, and at each visit she asked him :

" Shall I see my Cosette soon ? "

He answered :

" Perhaps to-morrow. I expect her every moment."

And the mother's pale face would brighten.

" Ah !" she would say, " how happy I shall be."

We have just said she did not recover : on the contrary, her condition seemed to become worse from week to week. That handful of snow applied to the naked skin between her shoulder-blades, had caused a sudden check of perspiration, in consequence of which the disease, which had been forming for some years, at last attacked her violently. They were just at that time beginning in the diagnosis and treatment of lung diseases, to follow the fine theory of Laennec. The doctor sounded her lungs and shook his head.

Monsieur Madeleine said to him :

" Well ? "

" Has she not a child she is anxious to see ? " said the doctor.

" Yes."

" Well then, make haste to bring her."

Monsieur Madeleine gave a shudder.

Fantine asked him : " What did the doctor say ? "

Monsieur Madeleine tried to smile.

" He told us to bring your child at once. That will restore your health."

“Oh!” she cried, “he is right. But what is the matter with these Thenardiers that they keep my Cosette from me? Oh! she is coming! Here at last I see happiness near me.”

The Thenardiers, however, did not “let go of the child;” they gave a hundred bad reasons. Cosette was too delicate to travel in the winter time, and then there were a number of little petty debts, of which they were collecting the bills, &c., &c.

“I will send somebody for Cosette,” said Monsieur Madeleine; “if necessary, I will go myself.”

He wrote at Fantine’s dictation this letter, which she signed.

“Monsieur Thenardier:

“You will deliver Cosette to the bearer.

“He will settle all small debts.

“I have the honour to salute you with consideration.

“FANTINE.”

In the meanwhile a serious matter intervened. In vain we chisel, as best we can, the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny reappears continually.

## II.

### HOW JEAN CAN BECOME CHAMP.

ONE morning Monsieur Madeleine was in his office arranging for some pressing business of the mayoralty, in case he should decide to go to Montfermeil himself, when he was informed that Javert, the Inspector of police, wished to speak with him. On hearing this name spoken, Monsieur Madeleine could not repress a disagreeable impression.

Since the affair of the Bureau of Police, Javert had more than ever avoided him, and Monsieur Madeleine had not seen him at all.

"Let him come in," said he.

Javert entered.

Monsieur Madeleine remained seated near the fire, looking over a bundle of papers upon which he was making notes, and which contained the returns of the police patrol. He did not disturb himself at all for Javert: he could not but think of poor Fantine, and it was fitting that he should receive him very coldly.

Javert respectfully saluted the Mayor, who had his back towards him. The Mayor did not look up, but continued to make notes on the papers.

Javert advanced a few steps, and paused without breaking silence.

A physiognomist, had he been familiar with Javert's face, had he made a study for years of this savage in the service of civilization, this odd mixture of the Roman, Spartan, monk, and corporal, this spy, incapable of a lie, this virgin detective—a physiognomist, had he known his secret and inveterate aversion for Monsieur Madeleine, his contest with the Mayor on the subject of Fantine, and had he seen Javert at that moment, would have said: "What has happened to him?"

It was evident to any one who had known this conscientious, straight-forward, clear, sincere, upright, austere, fierce man, that Javert had suffered some great interior commotion. There was nothing in his mind that was not depicted on his face. He was, like all violent people, subject to sudden changes. Never had his face been stranger or more startling. On entering, he had bowed before Monsieur Madeleine with a look in which was neither rancour, anger, nor defiance; he passed some steps behind the Mayor's chair, and was now standing in a soldierly

attitude with the natural, cold rudeness of a man who was never kind, but has always been patient: he waited without speaking a word or making a motion, in genuine humility and tranquil resignation, until it should please Monsieur the Mayor to turn towards him, calm, serious, hat in hand, and eyes cast down with an expression between that of a soldier before his officer and a prisoner before his judge. All the feeling as well as all the remembrances which we should have expected him to have, disappeared. Nothing was left upon this face, simple and impenetrable as granite, except a gloomy sadness. His whole person expressed abasement and firmness, an indescribably courageous dejection.

At last the Mayor laid down his pen and turned partly round:

“Well, what is it? What is the matter, Javert?”

Javert remained silent a moment, as if collecting himself; then raised his voice with a sad solemnity which did not, however, exclude simplicity: “There has been a criminal act committed, Monsieur Mayor.”

“What act?”

“An inferior agent of the government has been wanting in respect to a magistrate in the gravest manner. I come, as is my duty, to bring the fact to your knowledge.”

“Who is this agent?” asked Monsieur Madeleine.

“I,” said Javert.

“You?”

“I.”

“And who is the magistrate who has to complain of this agent?”

“You, Monsieur Mayor.”

Monsieur Madcleine straightened himself in his chair. Javert continued, with serious looks and eyes still cast down.

“Monsieur Mayor, I come to ask you to be so kind as to make charges and procure my dismissal.”

Monsieur Madeleine, amazed, opened his mouth. Javert interrupted him :

" You will say that I might tender my resignation, but that is not enough. To resign is honourable : I have done wrong. I ought to be punished. I must be dismissed."

And after a pause he added :

" Monsieur Mayor, you were severe to me the other day, unjustly. Be justly so to-day."

" Ah, indeed ! why ? What is all this nonsense ? What does it all mean ? What is the criminal act committed by you against me ? What have you done to me ? How have you wronged me ? You accuse yourself : do you wish to be relieved ? "

" Dismissed," said Javert.

" Dismissed it is, then. It is very strange. I do not understand you."

" You will understand, Monsieur Mayor," Javert sighed deeply, and continued sadly and coldly :

" Monsieur Mayor, six weeks ago, after that scene about that girl, I was enraged and I denounced you."

" Denounced me ? "

" To the Prefecture of Police at Paris."

Monsieur Madeleine, who did not laugh much oftener than Javert, began to laugh :

" As a Mayor having encroached upon the police ? "

" As a former convict."

The Mayor became livid.

Javert, who had not raised his eyes, continued :

" I believed it. For a long while I had had suspicions. A resemblance, information you obtained at Faverolles, your immense strength ; the affair of old Fauchelevent ; your skill as a marksman ; your leg which drags a little—and in fact I don't know what other stupidities ; but at last I took you for a man named Jean Valjean."

" Named what ? How did you call that name ? "

"Jean Valjean. He was a convict I saw twenty years ago, when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. After leaving the galleys this Valjean, it appears, robbed a Bishop's palace, then he committed another robbery with weapons in his hands, in a highway, on a little Savoyard. For eight years his whereabouts have been unknown, and search has been made for him. I fancied—in short I have done this thing. Anger determined me, and I denounced you to the Prefect."

M. Madeleine, who had taken up the file of papers again, a few moments before, said with a tone of perfect indifference : "And what answer did you get?"

"That I was crazy."

"Well!"

"Well; they were right."

"It is fortunate that you think so!"

"It must be so, for the real Jean Valjean has been found."

The paper that M. Madeleine held fell from his hand ; he raised his head, looked steadily at Javert, and said in an inexpressible tone :

"Ah!"

Javert continued :

"I will tell you how it is, Monsieur Mayor. There was, it appears, in the country, near Ailly-le-Haut Clocher, a simple sort of fellow who was called Father Champmathieu. He was very poor. Nobody paid any attention to him. Such folks live, one hardly knows how. Finally, this last fall, Father Champmathieu was arrested for stealing cider apples from —, but that is of no consequence. There was a theft, a wall scaled, branches of trees broken. Our Champmathieu was arrested ; he had even then a branch of an apple-tree in his hand. The rogue was caged. So far, it was nothing more than a penitentiary matter. But here comes in the hand of Providence. The jail being in bad

condition, the police justice thought it best to take him to Arras, where the prison of the department is. In this prison at Arras there was a former convict named Brevet, who is there for some trifle, and who, for his good conduct, has been made turnkey. No sooner was Champmathieu set down, than Brevet cried out : ‘Ha, ha ! I know that man. He is a returned convict.’

“ ‘Look up here, my good man. You are Jean Valjean.’ ‘Jean Valjean, who is Jean Valjean?’ Champmathieu plays off the astonished. ‘Don’t play ignorance,’ said Brevet. ‘You are Jean Valjean ; you were in the galleys at Toulon. It is twenty years ago. We were there together.’ Champmathieu denied it all. Faith ! you understand ; they fathomed it. The case was worked up and this was what they found. This Champmathieu thirty years ago was a pruner in divers places, particularly in Faverolles. There we lose trace of him. A long time afterwards we find him at Auvergne ! then at Paris, where he is said to have been a wheelwright and to have had a daughter—a washerwoman, but that is not proven, and finally in this part of the country. Now before going to the galleys for burglary, what was Jean Valjean ? A pruner. Where ? At Faverolles. Another fact. This Valjean’s baptismal name was Jean ; his mother’s family name, Mathieu. Nothing could be more natural, on leaving the galleys, than to take his mother’s name to disguise himself ; then he would be called Jean Mathieu. He goes to Auvergne, the pronunciation of that region would make *Chan* of *Jean*—they would call him Chan Mathieu. Our man adopts it, and now you have him transformed into Champmathieu. You follow me, do you not ? Search has been made at Faverolles ; the family of Jean Valjean are no longer there. Nobody knows where they are. You know in such classes these disappearances of families often occur. You search, but can find nothing. Such people, when they are not mud, are dust. And then as the com-

mencement of this story dates back thirty years, there is nobody now at Faverolles who knew Jean Valjean. But search has been made at Toulon. Besides Brevet there are only two convicts who have seen Jean Valjean. They are convicts for life; their names are Cochepaille and Chenilieu. These men were brought from the galleys and confronted with the pretended Champmathieu. They did not hesitate. To them as well as to Brevet it was Jean Valjean. Same age; fifty-four years old; same height; same appearance, in fact the same man; it is he. At this time it was that I sent my denunciation to the Prefecture of Paris. They replied that I was out of my mind, and that Jean Valjean was at Arras in the hands of justice. You may imagine how that astonished me; I who believed that I had here the same Jean Valjean. I wrote to the Justice; he sent for me and brought Champmathieu before me."

"Well," interrupted Monsieur Madcleine.

Javert replied, with an incorruptible and sad face:

"Monsieur Mayor, truth is truth. I am sorry for it, but that man is Jean Valjean. I recogniscd him also."

Monsieur Madelcine said in a very low voice:

"Are you sure?"

Javert began to laugh with the suppressed laugh which indicates profound conviction.

"I'm, sure ''"

He remained a moment in thought, mechanically taking up pinches of the powdered wood uscd to dry ink, from the box on the table, and then added:

"And now that I see the rcal Jean Valjean, I do not understand how I ever could have believed anything else. I beg your pardon Monsieur Mayor."

In uttering these serious and supplicating words to him, who six weeks before had humiliated him before the entire guard, and had said, "Retire!" Javert, this haughty man, was unconsciously full of simplicity and dignity. Mon-

sieur Madeleine answered his request, by this abrupt question :

“ And what did the man say ? ”

“ Oh, bless me ! Monsieur Mayor, the affair is a bad one. If it is Jean Valjean, it is a second offence. To climb a wall, break a branch, and take apples, for a child is only a trespass ; for a man it is a misdemeanour ; for a convict it is a crime. Scaling a wall and theft includes everything. It is not a case for a police court, but for the Assizes. It is not a few days' imprisonment, but the galleys for life. And then there is the affair of the little Savoyard, who I hope will be found. The devil ! There is something to struggle against, is there not ? There would be for anybody but Jean Valjean. But Jean Valjean is a sly fellow. And that is just where I recognise him. Anybody else would know that he was in a hot place, and would rave and cry out, as the tea-kettle sings on the fire ; he would say that he was not Jean Valjean, et cetera. But this man pretends not to understand, he says : ‘ I am Champmathieu : I have no more to say.’ He puts on an appearance of astonishment ; he plays the brute. Oh, the rascal is cunning ! But it is all the same, there is the evidence. Four persons have recognised him, and the old villain will be condemned. It has been taken to the Assizes at Arras. I am going to testify. I have been summoned.”

Monsieur Madeleine had turned again to his desk, and was quietly looking over his papers, reading and writing alternately, like a man pressed with business. He turned again towards Javert !

“ That will do, Javert. Indeed all these details interest me very little. We are wasting time, and we have urgent business, Javert ; go at once to the house of the good woman Buseaupied, who sells herbs at the corner of Rue Saint Saulve ; tell her to make her complaint against the carman Pierre Chesnelong. He is a brutal fellow, he

almost crushed this woman and her child. He must be punished. Then you will go to Monsieur Charcellay, Rue Montre-de-Champigny. He complains that the gutter of the next house when it rains, throws water upon his house, and is undermining the foundation. Then you will inquire into the offences that have been reported to me, at the widow Doris's, Rue Guibourg, and Madame Renée le Bossé's, Rue du Garraud Blanc, and make out reports. But I am giving you too much to do. Did you not tell me you were going to Arras in eight or ten days on this matter?"

"Sooner than that, Monsieur Mayor."

"What day then?"

"I think I told Monsieur that the case would be tried to-morrow, and that I should leave by the diligence to-night."

Monsieur Madeleine made an imperceptible motion.

"And how long will the matter last?"

"One day at longest. Sentence will be pronounced at latest to-morrow evening. But I shall not wait for the sentence, which is certain; as soon as my testimony is given I shall return here."

"Very well," said Monsieur Madeleine.

And he dismissed him with a wave of his hand.

Javert did not go.

"Your pardon, monsieur," said he.

"What more is there?" asked Monsieur Madeleine.

"Monsieur Mayor, there is one thing more to which I desire to call your attention."

"What is it?"

"It is that I ought to be dismissed."

Monsieur Madeleine arose.

"Javert, you are a man of honour, and I esteem you. You exaggerate your fault. Besides, this is an offence which concerns me. You are worthy of promotion rather than disgrace. I desire you to keep your place."

Javert looked at Monsieur Madeleine with his calm eyes, in whose depths it seemed that one beheld his conscience, unenlightened, but stern and pure, and said in a tranquil voice :

“ Monsieur Mayor, I cannot agree to that.”

“ I repeat,” said Monsieur Madeleine, “ that this matter concerns me.”

But Javert, with his one idea, continued :

“ As to exaggerating, I do not exaggerate. This is the way I reason. I have unjustly suspected you. That is nothing. It is our province to suspect, although it may be an abuse of our right to suspect our superiors. But without proofs and in a fit of anger, with revenge as my aim, I denounced you as a convict—you, a respectable man, a mayor, and a magistrate. This is a serious matter, very serious. I have committed an offence against authority in your person, I who am the agent of authority. If one of my subordinates had done what I have, I would have pronounced him unworthy of the service, and sent him away. Well, listen a moment, Monsieur Mayor; I have often been severe in my life towards others. It was just. I did right. Now if I were not severe towards myself, all I have justly done would become injustice. Should I spare myself more than others? No. What! if I should be prompt only to punish others and not myself, I should be a wretch indeed! They who say : ‘That blackguard, Javert,’ would be right. Monsieur Mayor, I do not wish you to treat me with kindness. Your kindness, when it was for others, enraged me; I do not wish it for myself. That kindness which consists in defending a woman of the town against a citizen, a police agent against the mayor, the inferior against the superior, that is what I call ill-judged kindness. Such kindness disorganizes society. Good God, it is easy to be kind; the difficulty is to be just. Had you been what I thought, I should not have been kind to you; not I. You

would have seen, Monsieur Mayor. I ought to treat myself as I should treat anybody else. When I put down malefactors, when I rigorously brought up offenders, I often said to myself: ‘You, if you ever trip; if ever I catch you doing wrong, look out!’ I have tripped. I have caught myself doing wrong. So much the worse! I must be sent away, broken, dismissed, that is right. I have hands: I can till the ground; it is all the same to me. Monsieur Mayor, the good of the service demands an example. I simply ask the dismissal of Inspector Javert.”

All this was said in a tone of proud humility, a desperate and resolute tone, which gave an indescribably whimsical grandeur to this oddly honest man.

“We will see,” said Monsieur Madeleine.

And he held out his hand to him.

Javert started back, and said fiercely:

“Pardon, Monsieur Mayor, that should not be. A mayor does not give his hand to a spy.”

He added between his teeth:

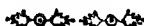
“Spy, yes; from the moment I abused the power of my position, I have been nothing better than a spy!”

Then he bowed profoundly and went towards the door.

There he turned around: his eyes yet downcast.

“Monsieur Mayor, I will continue in the service until I am relieved.”

He went out. Monsieur Madeleine sat musing, listening to his firm and resolute step as it died away along the corridor.





## Book Seventh

### THE CHAMPMATHIEU AFFAIR

#### I.

##### SISTER SIMPLICE.

THE events which follow were never all known at M—sur M—. But the few which did leak out have left such memories in that city, that it would be a serious omission in this book if we did not relate them in their minutest details.

Among these details, the reader will meet with two or three improbable circumstances, which we preserve from respect for the truth.

In the afternoon following the visit of Javert, M. Madeleine went to see Fantine as usual.

Before going to Fantine's room, he sent for Sister Simplice.

The two nuns who attended the infirmary Lazarists, as all these Sisters of Charity are, were called Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice.

Sister Perpétue was an ordinary village-girl, summarily become a Sister of Charity, who entered the service of God

as she would have entered service anywhere. She was a nun as others are cooks. This type is not very rare. The monastic orders gladly accept this heavy peasant clay, easily shaped into a Capuchine or an Ursuline. Such rustics are useful for the coarser duties of devotion. There is no shock in the transition from a cow-boy to a Carmelite ; the one becomes the other without much labour ; the common basis of ignorance of a village and a cloister is a ready-made preparation, and puts the rustic at once upon an even footing with the monk. Enlarge the smock a little and you have a frock. Sister Perpétue was a stout nun, from Marines, near Pontoise, given to patois, psalm-singing and muttering, sugaring a nostrum according to the bigotry or hypocrisy of the patient, treating invalids harshly, rough with the dying, almost throwing them into the face of God, belabouring the death agony with angry prayers, bold, honest, and florid.

Sister Simplice was white with a waxen clearness. In comparison with Sister Perpétue she was a sacramental taper by the side of a tallow-candle. St. Vincent de Paul has divinely drawn the figure of a Sister of Charity in these admirable words in which he unites so much liberty with so much servitude. “Her only convent shall be the house of sickness ; her only cell, a hired lodging ; her chapel the parish church ; her cloister the streets of the city, or the wards of the hospital ; her only wall obedience ; her grate the fear of God ; her veil modesty.” This ideal was made alive in Sister Simplice. No one could have told Sister Simplice’s age ; she had never been young, and seemed as if she never should be old. She was a person—we dare not say a woman—gentle, austere, companionable, cold, and who had never told a lie. She was so gentle that she appeared fragile ; but on the contrary she was more enduring than granite. She touched the unfortunate with charming fingers, delicate and pure. There was, so to say, silence in her speech ; she said just what was necessary,

and she had a tone of voice which would at the same time have edified a confessional, and enchanted a drawing-room. This delicacy accommodated itself to the serge dress, finding in its harsh touch a continual reminder of Heaven and of God. Let us dwell upon one circumstance. Never to have lied, never to have spoken, for any purpose whatever, even carelessly, a single word which was not the truth, the sacred truth, was the distinctive trait of Sister Simplice ; it was the mark of her virtue. She was almost celebrated in the congregation for this imperturbable veracity. The Abbé Sicard speaks of Sister Simplice in a letter to the deaf mute, Massieu. Sincere and pure as we may be, we all have the mark of some little lie upon our truthfulness. She had none. A little lie, an innocent lie, can such a thing exist ? To lie is the absolute of evil. To lie a little is not possible ; he who lies, lies a whole lie ; lying is the very face of the demon. Satan has two names ; he is called Satan, and he is called the Liar. Such were her thoughts. And as she thought, she practised. From this resulted that whiteness of which we have spoken, a whiteness that covered with its radiance even her lips and her eyes. Her smile was white. Her look was white. There was not a spider's web, not a speck of dust upon the glass of that conscience. When she took the vows of St. Vincent de Paul, she had taken the name of Simplice by especial choice. Simplice of Sicily, it is well known, is that saint who preferred to have both her breasts torn out rather than answer, having been born at Syracuse, that she was born at Segesta, a lie which would have saved her. This patron saint was fitting for this soul.

Sister Simplice, on entering the order, had two faults of which she corrected herself gradually ; she had had a taste for delicacies, and loved to receive letters. Now she read nothing but a prayer-book in large type and in Latin. She did not understand Latin, but she understood the book.

The pious woman had conceived an affection for Fantine perceiving in her probably some latent virtue, and had devoted herself almost exclusively to her care.

Monsieur Madeleine took Sister Simplice aside and recommended Fantine to her with a singular emphasis, which the Sister remembered at a later day.

On leaving the Sister, he approached Fantine.

Fantine awaited each day the appearance of Monsieur Madeleine as one awaits a ray of warmth and of joy. She would say to the sisters : “I live only when the Mayor is here.”

That day she had more fever. As soon as she saw Monsieur Madeleine, she asked him :

“Cosette?”

He answered with a smile :

“Very soon.”

Monsieur Madeleine, while with Fantine, seemed the same as usual. Only he stayed an hour instead of half an hour, to the great satisfaction of Fantine. He made a thousand charges to everybody that the sick woman might want for nothing. It was noticed that at one moment his countenance became very sombre. But this was explained when it was known that the doctor had, bending close to his ear, said to him : “She is sinking fast.”

Then he returned to the Mayor’s office, and the office boy saw him examine attentively a road map of France which hung in his room. He made a few figures in pencil upon a piece of paper.

## II.

### SHREWDNESS OF MASTER SCAUFFLAIRE.

FROM the Mayor’s office he went to the outskirts of the city, to a Fleming’s, Master Scaufflaer, Frenchified into Scaufflair, who kept horses to let and “chaises if desired.”

In order to go to Scaufflaire's, the nearest way was by a rarely frequented street, on which was the parsonage of the parish in which Monsieur Madeleine lived. The curé was, it was said, a worthy and respectable man, and a good counsellor. At the moment when Monsieur Madeleine arrived in front of the parsonage, there was but one person passing in the street, and he remarked this: the Mayor, after passing by the curé's house, stopped, stood still a moment, then turned back and retraced his steps as far as the door of the parsonage, which was a large door with an iron knocker. He seized the knocker quickly and raised it; then he stopped anew, stood a short time as if in thought, and after a few seconds, instead of letting the knocker fall smartly, he replaced it gently, and resumed his walk with a sort of haste that he had not shown before.

Monsieur Madeleine found Master Scaufflaire at home busy repairing a harness.

"Master Scaufflaire," he asked, "have you a good horse?"

"Monsieur Mayor," said the Fleming, "all my horses are good. What do you understand by a good horse?"

"I understand a horse that can go twenty leagues in a day."

"The devil!" said the Fleming, "twenty leagues?"

"Yes."

"Before a chaise?"

"Yes."

"And how long will he rest after the journey?"

"He must be able to start again the next day in case of need."

"To do the same thing again?"

"Yes."

"The devil! and it is twenty leagues?"

Monsieur Madeleine drew from his pocket the paper on which he had pencilled the figures. He showed them to the Fleming. They were the figures, 5, 6,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ .

“ You see,” said he. “ Total, nineteen and a half, that is to say, twenty leagues.”

“ Monsieur Mayor,” resumed the Fleming, “ I have just what you want. My little white horse, you must have seen him sometimes passing ; he is a little beast from Bas-Boulonnais. He is full of fire. They tried at first to make a saddle-horse of him. Bah ! he kicked, he threw everybody off. They thought he was vicious, they didn’t know what to do. I bought him. I put him before a chaise ; Monsieur, that is what he wanted ; he is as gentle as a girl, he goes like the wind. But, for example, it won’t do to get on his back. It’s not his idea to be a saddle horse. Everybody has his peculiar ambition. To draw, but not to carry : we must believe that he has said that to himself.”

“ And he will make the trip ?”

“ Your twenty leagues, all the way at a full trot, and in less than eight hours. But there are some conditions.”

“ Name them.”

“ First, you must let him breathe an hour when you are half way ; he will eat, and somebody must be by while he eats to prevent the tavern boy from stealing his oats ; for I have noticed that at taverns, oats are oftener drunk by the stable boys than eaten by the horses.”

“ Somebody shall be there.”

“ Secondly—is the chaise for Monsieur the Mayor ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Monsieur the Mayor knows how to drive ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, Monsieur the Mayor will travel alone and without baggage, so as not to overload the horse.”

“ Agreed.”

“ But Monsieur the Mayor, having no one with him, will be obliged to take the trouble of seeing to the oats himself.”

“ So said.”

"I must have thirty francs a day, the days he rests included. Not a penny less, and the fodder of the beast at the expense of Monsieur the Mayor."

Monsieur Madeleine took three napoleons from his purse and laid them on the table.

"There is two days, in advance."

"Fourthly, for such a trip, a chaise would be too heavy; that would tire the horse. Monsieur the Mayor must consent to travel in a little tilbury that I have."

"I consent to that."

"It is light, but it is open."

"It is all the same to me."

"Has Monsieur the Mayor reflected that it is winter?"

Monsieur Madeleine did not answer; the Fleming went on:

"That it is very cold?"

Monsieur Madeleine kept silence.

Master Scaufflaire continued:

"That it may rain?"

Monsieur Madeleine raised his head and said:

"The horse and the tilbury will be before my door tomorrow at half-past four in the morning."

"That is understood, Monsieur Mayor," answered Scaufflaire, then, scratching a stain on the top of the table with his thumb-nail, he resumed with that careless air that Flemings so well know how to associate with their shrewdness:

"Why, I have just thought of it! Monsieur the Mayor has not told me where he is going. Where is Monsieur the Mayor going?"

He had thought of nothing else since the beginning of the conversation, but without knowing why, he had not dared to ask the question.

"Has your horse good fore legs?" said Monsieur Madeleine.

"Yes, Monsieur Mayor. You will hold him up a little

going down hill. Is there much down hill between here and where you are going?"

"Don't forget to be at my door precisely at half-past four in the morning," answered Monsieur Madeleine, and he went out.

The Fleming was left "dumb-founded," as he said himself sometime afterwards.

The Mayor had been gone two or three minutes, when the door again opened; it was the Mayor.

He had the same impassive and absent-minded air as ever.

"Monsieur Scaufflaire," said he, "at what sum do you value the horse and the tilbury that you furnish me, the one carrying the other?"

"The one drawing the other, Monsieur Mayor," said the Fleming, with a loud laugh.

"As you like. How much?"

"Does Monsieur the Mayor wish to buy them?"

"No, but at all events I wish to guarantee them to you. On my return you can give me back the amount. At how much do you value horse and chaise?"

"Five hundred francs, Monsieur Mayor!"

"Here it is."

Monsieur Madelcine placed a banknote on the table, then went out, and this time did not return.

Master Scaufflaire regretted terribly that he had not said a thousand francs. In fact, the horse and tilbury, in the lump, were worth a hundred crowns.

The Fleming called his wife, and related the affair to her. Where the *déuce* could the Mayor be going? They talked it over. "He is going to Paris," said the wife. "I don't believe it," said the husband. Monsieur Madeleine had forgotten the paper on which he had marked the figures, and left it on the mantel. The Fleming seized it and studied it. Five, six, eight and a half? this must mean the relays of the post. He turned to his wife: "I have found it out."

“How?” “It is five leagues from here to Hesdin, six from Hesdin to Saint Pol, eight and a half from Saint Pol to Arras. He is going to Arras.”

Meanwhile Monsieur Madeleine had reached home. To return from Master Scaufflaire’s he had taken a longer road, as if the door of the parsonage were a temptation to him, and he wished to avoid it. He went up to his room, and shut himself in, which was nothing remarkable, for he usually went to bed early. However, the janitress of the factory, who was at the same time Monsieur Madeleine’s only servant, observed that his light was out at half-past eight, and she mentioned it to the cashier who came in, adding :

“Is Monsieur the Mayor sick? I thought that his manner was a little singular.”

The cashier occupied a room situated exactly beneath Monsieur Madeleine’s. He paid no attention to the portress’s words, went to bed, and went to sleep. Towards midnight he suddenly awoke; he had heard, in his sleep, a noise overhead. He listened. It was a step that went and came, as if some one were walking in the room above. He listened more attentively, and recognized Monsieur Madeleine’s step. That appeared strange to him; ordinarily no noise was made in Monsieur Madeleine’s room before his hour of rising. A moment afterwards, the cashier heard something that sounded like the opening and the shutting of a wardrobe, then a piece of furniture was moved, there was another silence, and the step began again. The cashier rose up in bed, threw off his drowsiness, looked out, and through his window-panes, saw upon an opposite wall the ruddy reflection of a lighted window. From the direction of the rays, it could only be the window of Monsieur Madeleine’s chamber. The reflection trembled as if it came rather from a bright fire than from a light. The shadow of the sash could not be seen, which indicated that the window was wide open. Cold as it was, this open window was surpris-

ing. The cashier fell asleep. An hour or two afterwards he awoke again. The same step, slow and regular, was coming and going constantly over his head.

The reflection continued visible upon the wall, but it was now pale and steady like the light from a lamp or a candle. The window was still open.

Let us see what was passing in Monsieur Madeleine's room.

### III.

#### A TEMPEST IN A BRAIN.

THE reader has doubtless divined that Monsieur Madeleine is none other than Jean Valjean.

We have already looked into the depths of that conscience ; the time has come to look into them again. We do so not without emotion, nor without trembling. There exists nothing more terrific than this kind of contemplation. The mind's eye can nowhere find anything more dazzling nor more dark than in man ; it can fix itself upon nothing which is more awful, more complex, more mysterious, or more infinite. There is one spectacle grander than the sea, that is the sky ; there is one spectacle grander than the sky, that is the interior of the soul.

To write the poem of the human conscience, were it only of a single man, were it only of the most infamous of men, would be to swallow up all epics in a superior and final epic. The conscience is the chaos of chimeras, of lusts, and of temptations, the furnace of dreams, the cave of the ideas which are our shame ; it is the pandemonium of sophisms, the battle-field of the passions. At certain hours, penetrate within the livid face of a human being who reflects, and look at what lies behind ; look into that soul, look into that obscurity. There, beneath the external silence, there are combats of giants as in Homer, melées of dragons and

hydras, and clouds of phantoms as in Milton, ghostly labyrinths as in Dante. What a gloom enwraps that infinite which each man bears within himself, and by which he measures in despair the desires of his will, and the actions of his life.

Alighier arrived one day at an ill-omened door before which he hesitated. Here is one also before us on the threshold of which we hesitate. Let us enter, notwithstanding.

We have but little to add to what the reader already knows, concerning what had happened to Jean Valjean, since his adventure with Petit Gervais. From that moment, we have seen, he was another man. What the Bishop had desired to do with him, that he had executed. It was more than a transformation—it was a transfiguration.

He succeeded in escaping from sight, sold the Bishop's silver, keeping only the candlesticks as souvenirs, glided quietly from city to city across France, came to M—— sur M——, conceived the idea we have described, accomplished what we have related, gained the point of making himself unassailable and inaccessible, and thenceforward established at M—— sur M——, happy to feel his conscience saddened by his past, and the last half of his existence giving the lie to the first, he lived peaceable, reassured, and hopeful, having but two thoughts : to conceal his name, and to sanctify his life ; to escape from men and to return to God.

These two thoughts were associated so closely in his mind, that they formed but a single one ; they were both equally absorbing and imperious, and ruled his slightest actions. Ordinarily they were in harmony in the regulation of the conduct of his life ; they turned him towards the dark side of life ; they made him benevolent and simple-hearted; they counselled him to the same things. Sometimes, however, there was a conflict between them. In such cases it will be remembered, the man, whom all the country around

M—— sur M—— called Monsieur Madeleine, did not waver in sacrificing the first to the second, his security to his virtue. Thus, in despite of all reserve and of all prudence, he had kept the Bishop's candlesticks, worn mourning for him, called and questioned all the little Savoyards who passed by, gathered information concerning the families at Faverolles, and saved the life of old Fauchelevent, in spite of the disquieting insinuations of Javert. It would seem, we have already remarked, that he thought, following the example of all who have been wise, holy, and just, that his highest duty was not towards himself.

But of all these occasions, it must be said, none had ever been anything like that which was now presented.

Never had the two ideas that governed the unfortunate man whose sufferings we are relating, engaged in so serious a struggle. He comprehended this confusedly, but thoroughly, from the first words that Javert pronounced on entering his office. At the moment when that name which he had so deeply buried was so strangely uttered, he was seized with stupor, and as if intoxicated by the sinister grotesqueness of his destiny, and through that stupor he felt the shudder which precedes great shocks ; he bent like an oak at the approach of a storm, like a soldier at the approach of an assault. He felt clouds full of thunderings and lightnings gathering upon his head. Even while listening to Javert, his first thought was to go, to run, to denounce himself, to drag this Champmathieu out of prison, and to put himself in his place ; it was painful and sharp as an incision into the living flesh, but passed away, and he said to himself : "Let us see ! Let us see !" He repressed this first generous impulse and recoiled before such heroism.

Doubtless it would have been fine if, after the holy words of the Bishop, after so many years of repentance and self-denial, in the midst of a penitence admirably commenced, even in the presence of so terrible a conjuncture, he had not

faltered an instant, and had continued to march on with even pace towards that yawning pit at the bottom of which was heaven ; this would have been fine, but this was not the case. We must render an account of what took place in that soul, and we can relate only what was there. What first gained control was the instinct of self-preservation ; he collected his ideas hastily, stifled his emotions, took into consideration the presence of Javert, the great danger, postponed any decision with the firmness of terror, banished from his mind all consideration of the course he should pursue, and resumed his calmness as a gladiator retakes his buckler.

For the rest of the day he was in this state, a tempest within, a perfect calm without ; he took only what might be called precautionary measures. All was still confused and jostling in his brain ; the agitation there was such that he did not see distinctly the form of any idea ; and he could have told nothing of himself, unless it were that he had just received a terrible blow. He went according to his habit to the sick bed of Fantine, and prolonged his visit, by an instinct of kindness, saying to himself that he ought to do so, and recommend her earnestly to the sisters, in case it should happen that he would have to be absent. He felt vaguely that it would perhaps be necessary for him to go to Arras ; and without having in the least decided upon this journey, he said to himself that, entirely free from suspicion as he was, there would be no difficulty in being a witness of what might pass, and he engaged Scaufflaire's tilbury, in order to be prepared for any emergency.

He dined with a good appetite.

Returning to his room he collected his thoughts.

He examined the situation and found it an unheard-of one ; so unheard-of that in the midst of his reverie, by some strange impulse of almost inexplicable anxiety, he rose from his chair, and bolted his door. He feared lest something

might yet enter. He barricaded himself against all possibilities.

A moment afterwards he blew out his light. It annoyed him.

It seemed to him that somebody could see him.

Who? Somebody?

Alas! what he wanted to keep out of doors had entered; what he wanted to render blind was looking upon him. His conscience.

His conscience, that is to say, God.

At the first moment, however, he had deluded himself; he had a feeling of safety and solitude; the bolt drawn, he believed himself impregnable; the candle put out, he felt himself invisible. Then he took possession of himself; he placed his elbows on the table, rested his head on his hand, and set himself to meditating in the darkness.

“Where am I? Am I not in a dream? What have I heard? Is it really true that I saw this Javert, and that he talked to me so? Who can this Champmathieu be? He resembles me then? Is it possible? When I think that yesterday I was so calm, and so far from suspecting anything! What was I doing yesterday at this time? What is there in this matter? How will it turn out? What is to be done?”

Such was the torment he was in. His brain had lost the power of retaining its ideas; they passed away like waves, and he grasped his forehead with both hands to stop them.

Out of this tumult, which overwhelmed his will and his reason, and from which he sought to draw a certainty and a resolution, nothing came clearly forth but anguish.

His brain was burning. He went to the window and threw it wide open. Not a star was in the sky. He returned and sat down by the table.

The first hour thus rolled away

Little by little, however, vague outlines began to take form and to fix themselves in his meditation ; he could perceive, with the precision of reality, not the whole of the situation, but a few details.

He began by recognizing that, however extraordinary and critical the situation was, he was completely master of it.

His stupor only became the deeper.

Independently of the severe and religious aim that his actions had in view, all that he had done up to this day was only a hole that he was digging in which to bury his name. What he had always most dreaded, in his hours of self-communion, in his sleepless nights, was the thought of ever hearing that name pronounced ; he felt that would be for him the end of all ; that the day on which that name should re-appear would see vanish from around him his new life, and, who knows, even perhaps his new soul from within him. He shuddered at the bare thought that it was possible. Surely, if anyone had told him at such moments that an hour would come when that name would resound in his ear, when that hideous word, Jean Valjean, would start forth suddenly from the night and stand before him : when this fearful glare, destined to dissipate the mystery in which he had wrapped himself, would flash suddenly upon his head, and that this name would not menace him, that this glare would only make his obscurity the deeper, that this rending of the veil would increase the mystery, that this earthquake would consolidate his edifice, that this prodigious event would have no other result, if it seemed good to him, to himself alone, than to render his existence at once more brilliant and more impenetrable, and that, from his encounter with the phantom of Jean Valjean, the good and worthy citizen, Monsieur Madeleine, would come forth more honoured, more peaceful, and more respected than ever—if anyone had said this to him, he would have shaken his head and looked upon the words as nonsense. Well ! pre-

cisely that had happened; all this grouping of the impossible was now a fact, and God had permitted these absurdities to become real things!

His musings continued to grow clearer. He was getting a wider and wider view of his position.

It seemed to him that he had just awaked from some wondrous slumber, and that he found himself gliding over a precipice in the middle of the night, standing, shivering, recoiling in vain, upon the very edge of an abyss. He perceived distinctly in the gloom an unknown man, a stranger, whom fate had mistaken for him, and was pushing into the gulf in his place. It was necessary, in order that the gulf should be closed, that some one should fall in, he or the other.

He had only to let it alone.

The light became complete, and he recognized this: That his place at the galleys was empty, that do what he could it was always awaiting him, that the robbing of Little Gervais sent him back there, that this empty place would await him and attract him until he should be there, that this was inevitable and fatal. And then he said to himself: That at this very moment he had a substitute, that it appeared that a man named Champmathieu had that unhappy lot, and that, as for himself, present in future at the galleys in the person of this Champmathieu, present in society under the name of Monsieur Madeleine, he had nothing more to fear, provided he did not prevent men from scaling upon the head of this Champmathieu that stone of infamy which, like the stone of the sepulchre, falls once never to rise again.

All this was so violent and so strange that he suddenly felt that kind of indescribable movement that no man experiences more than two or three times in his life, a sort of convulsion of the conscience that stirs up all that is dubious in the heart, which is composed of irony, of joy,

and of despair, and which might be called a burst of interior laughter.

He hastily relighted his candle.

"Well, what!" said he, "what am I afraid of? Why do I ponder over these things? I am now safe? all is finished. There was but a single half-open door through which my past could make an irruption into my life; that door is now walled up! for ever! This Javert who has troubled me so long, that fearful instinct which seemed to have divined the truth, that had divined it, in fact! and which followed me everywhere, that terrible bloodhound always in pursuit of me, he is thrown off the track, engrossed elsewhere, absolutely baffled. He is satisfied henceforth, he will leave me in quiet, he holds his Jean Valjean fast! Who knows! it is even probable that he will want to leave the city! And all this is accomplished without my aid! And I have nothing to do with it! Ah yes, but what is there unfortunate in all this? People who should see me, upon my honour, would think that a catastrophe had befallen me! After all, if there is any harm done to anybody, it is in nowise my fault. Providence has done it all. This is what He wishes apparently. Have I the right to disarrange what He arranges? What is it that I ask for now? Why do I interfere? It does not concern me. How! I am not satisfied! But what would I have then? The aim to which I have aspired for so many years, my nightly dream, the object of my prayers to heaven, security, I have gained it. It is God's will. I must do nothing contrary to the will of God. And why is it God's will? That I may carry on what I have begun, that I may do good, that I may be one day a grand and encouraging example, that it may be said that there was finally some little happiness resulting from this suffering which I have undergone and this virtue to which I have returned! Really I do not understand why I was so much afraid to go to this honest curé and tell him

the whole story as a confessor, and ask his advice ; this is evidently what he would have said to me. It is decided, let the matter alone ! let us not interfere with God."

Thus he spoke in the depths of his conscience, hanging over what might be called his own abyss. He rose from his chair, and began to walk the room. "Come," said he, "let us think of it no more. The resolution is formed !" But he felt no joy.

Quite the contrary.

One can no more prevent the mind from returning to an idea than the sea from returning to a shore. In the case of the sailor, this is called the tide ; in the case of the guilty, it is called remorse. God upheaves the soul as well as the ocean.

After the lapse of a few moments, he could do no otherwise, he resumed this sombre dialogue, in which it was himself who spoke and himself who listened, saying what he wished to keep silent, listening to what he did not wish to hear, yielding to that mysterious power which said to him : "think !" as it said two thousand years ago to another condemned : "march !"

Before going further, and in order to be fully understood, it is necessary that we should make with some emphasis a single observation.

It is certain that we talk with ourselves ; there is not a thinking being who has not experienced that. We may say even that the Word is never a more magnificent mystery than when it goes, in the interior of a man, from his thought to his conscience, and returns from his conscience to his thought. It is in this sense only that the words must be understood, so often employed in this chapter, *he said, he exclaimed* ; we say to ourselves, we speak to ourselves, we exclaim within ourselves, the external silence not being broken. There is a great tumult within ; everything within us speaks, except the tongue. The realities of the soul,

because they are not visible and palpable, are not the less realities.

He asked himself then where he was. He questioned himself upon this "resolution formed." He confessed to himself that all that he had been arranging in his mind was monstrous, that "to let the matter alone, not to interfere with God," was simply horrible, to let this mistake of destiny and of men be accomplished, not to prevent it, to lend himself to it by his silence, to do nothing, finally, was to do all ! it was the last degree of hypocritical meanness ! it was a base, cowardly, lying, abject, hideous crime !

For the first time within eight years, the unhappy man had just tasted the bitter flavour of a wicked thought and a wicked action.

He spit it out with disgust.

He continued to question himself. He sternly asked himself what he had understood by this : "My object is attained." He declared that his life, in truth, did have an object. But what object? to conceal his name? to deceive the police? was it for so petty a thing that he had done all that he had done? had he no other object, which was the great one, which was the true one? To save, not his body, but his soul. To become honest and good again. To be an upright man! was it not that above all, that alone, which he had always wished, and which the Bishop had enjoined upon him? To close the door on his past? But he was not closing it, great God! he was re-opening it by committing an infamous act! for he became a robber again, and the most odious of robbers! he robbed another of his existence, his life, his peace, his place in the world, he became an assassin! he murdered, he murdered in a moral sense a wretched man, he inflicted upon him that frightful life in death, that living burial, which is called the galleys! on the contrary, to deliver himself up, to save this man, stricken by so ghastly a mistake, to reassume his name, to

become again from duty the convict Jean Valjean ; that was really to achieve his resurrection, and to close for ever the hell from whence he had emerged ! to fall back into it in appearance, was to emerge in reality ! he must do that ! all he had done was nothing, if he did not do that ! all his life was useless, all his suffering was lost. He had only to ask the question : “ What is the use ? ” He felt that the Bishop was there, that the Bishop was present all the more that he was dead, that the Bishop was looking fixedly at him, that henceforth Mayor Madeleine with all his virtues would be abominable to him, and the galley slave, Jean Valjean, would be admirable and pure in his sight. That men saw his mask, but the Bishop saw his face. That men saw his life, but the Bishop saw his conscience. He must then go to Arras, deliver the wrong Jean Valjean, denounce the right one. Alas ! that was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the final step to be taken ; but he must do it. Mournful destiny ! he could only enter into sanctity in the eyes of God, by returning into infamy in the eyes of men !

“ Well,” said he, “ let us take this course ! let us do our duty ! Let us save this man ! ”

He pronounced these words in a loud voice, without perceiving that he was speaking aloud.

He took his books, verified them, and put them in order.

He threw into the fire a package of notes which he held against needy small traders. He wrote a letter, which he sealed, and upon the envelope of which might have been read, if there had been any one in the room at the time : *Monsieur Laffitte, banker, Rue d'Artois, Paris.*

He drew from a secretary a pocket-book containing some bank notes and the passport that he had used that same year in going to the elections.

Had any one seen him while he was doing these various acts with such serious meditation, he would not have sus-

pected what was passing within him. Still at intervals his lips quivered ; at other times he raised his head and fixed his eye on some point of the wall, as if he saw just there something that he wished to clear up or to interrogate.

The letter to Monsieur Laffitte finished, he put it in his pocket as well as the pocketbook, and began his walk again.

The current of his thought had not changed. He still saw his duty clearly written in luminous letters which flared out before his eyes, and moved with his gaze : *Go ! avow thy name ! denounce thyself !*

He saw also, and as if they were laid bare before him with sensible forms, the two ideas which had been hitherto the double rule of his life : to conceal his name, and to sanctify his soul. For the first time, they appeared to him absolutely distinct, and he saw the difference which separated them. He recognized that one of these ideas was necessarily good, while the other might become evil ; that the former was devotion, and that the latter was selfishness ; that the one said : “*the neighbour*,” and that the other said : “*me* ;” that the one came from the light, and the other from the night.

They were fighting with each other. He saw them fighting. While he was looking, they had expanded before his mind’s eye ; they were now colossal ; and it seemed to him that he saw struggling within him, in that infinite of which we spoke just now, in the midst of darkness and gloom, a goddess and a giantess.

He was full of dismay, but it seemed to him that the good thought was gaining the victory.

He felt that he had reached the second decisive moment of his conscience, and his destiny ; that the Bishop had marked the first phase of his new life, and that this Champmathieu marked the second. After a great crisis, a great trial.

Meanwhile the fever, quieted for an instant, returned upon him little by little. A thousand thoughts flashed across him, but they fortified him in his resolution.

One moment he had said : that perhaps he took the affair too much to heart, that after all this Champmathieu was not worthy of interest, that in fact he had committed theft.

He answered : If this man has in fact stolen a few apples, that is a month in prison. There is a wide distance between that and the galleys. And who knows even ? has he committed theft ? is it proven ? the name of Jean Valjean overwhelms him, and seems to dispense with proofs. Are not prosecuting officers in the habit of acting thus ? They think him a robber, because they know him to be a convict.

At another moment, the idea occurred to him that, if he should denounce himself, perhaps the heroism of his action, and his honest life for the past seven years, and what he had done for the country, would be considered, and he would be pardoned.

But this supposition quickly vanished, and he smiled bitterly at the thought, that the robbery of the forty sous from Little Gervais made him a second offender, that that matter would certainly reappear, and by the precise terms of the law he would be condemned to hard labour for life.

He turned away from all illusion, disengaged himself more and more from the earth, and sought consolation and strength elsewhere. He said to himself that he must do his duty ; that perhaps even he should not be more unhappy after having done his duty than after having evaded it ; that if he let matters alone, if he remained at M—— sur M——, his reputation, his good name, his good works, the deference, the veneration he commanded, his charity, his riches, his popularity, his virtue, would be tainted with a crime, and what pleasure would there be in all these holy

things tied to that hideous thing? while, if he carried out the sacrifice, in the galleys, with his chain, with his iron collar, with his green cap, with his perpetual labour, with his pitiless shame, there would be associated a celestial idea.

Finally, he said to himself that it was a necessity, that his destiny was so fixed, that it was not for him to derange the arrangements of God, that at all events he must choose, either virtue without, and abomination within, or sanctity within, and infamy without.

In revolving so many gloomy ideas, his courage did not fail, but his brain was fatigued. He began in spite of himself to think of other things, of indifferent things.

His blood rushed violently to his temples. He walked back and forth constantly. Midnight was struck first from the parish church, then from the City Hall. He counted the twelve strokes of the two clocks, and he compared the sound of the two bells. It reminded him that, a few days before, he had seen at a junk shop an old bell for sale, upon which was this name: *Antoine Ablin de Romainville*.

He was cold. He kindled a fire. He did not think to close the window.

Meanwhile he had fallen into his stupor again. It required not a little effort to recall his mind to what he was thinking of before the clocks struck. He succeeded at last.

“Ah! yes,” said he, “I had formed the resolution to denounce myself.”

And then all at once he thought of Fantine.

“Stop!” said he, “this poor woman!”

Here was a new crisis.

Fantine abruptly appearing in his reverie, was like a ray of unexpected light. It seemed to him that everything around him was changing its aspect; he exclaimed:

“Ah yes, indeed! so far I have only thought of myself! I have only looked to my own convenience! It is whether I shall keep silent or denounce myself, conceal my body or

save my soul, be a despicable and respected magistrate, or an infamous and venerable galley-slave ; it is myself, always myself, only myself. But, good God ! all this is egotism ! Different forms of egotism, but still egotism ! Suppose I should think a little of others ? The highest duty is to think of others. Let us see, let us examine ! I gone, I taken away, I forgotten ; what will become of all this ? I denounce myself ? I am arrested, this Champmathieu is released, I am sent back to the galleys ; very well, and what then ? what takes place here ? Ah ! here, there is a country, a city, factories, a business, labourers, men, women, old grandfathers, children, poor people ! I have created all this, I keep it all alive ; wherever a chimney is smoking, I have put the brands in the fire and the meat in the pot ; I have produced ease, circulation, credit ; before me there was nothing ; I have aroused, vivified, animated, quickened, stimulated, enriched, all the country ; without me the soul is gone. I take myself away ; it all dies. And this woman who has suffered so much, who is so worthy in her fall, all whose misfortunes I have unconsciously caused ! And that child which I was going for, which I have promised to the mother ! Do I not also owe something to this woman, in reparation for the wrong that I have done her ? If I should disappear, what happens ? The mother dies. The child becomes what she may. This is what comes to pass, if I denounce myself ; and if I do not denounce myself ? Let us see, if I do not denounce myself ? ”

After putting this question, he stopped ; for a moment he hesitated and trembled ; but that moment was brief, and he answered with calmness :

“ Well, this man goes to the galleys, it is true, but, what of that ? He has stolen ! It is useless for me to say he has not stolen, he has stolen ! As for me, I remain here, I go on. In ten years I shall have made ten millions ; I scatter it over the country, I keep nothing for myself ; what is it to

me? What I am doing is not for myself. The prosperity of all goes on increasing, industry is quickened and excited, manufactories and workshops are multiplied, families, a hundred families, a thousand families, are happy; the country becomes populous; villages spring up where there were only farms, farms spring up where there was nothing; poverty disappears, and with poverty disappear debauchery, prostitution, theft, murder, all vices, all crimes! And this poor mother brings up her child! and the whole country is rich and honest! Ah, yes! How foolish, how absurd I was! What was I speaking of in denouncing myself? This demands reflection, surely, and nothing must be precipitate. What! because it would have pleased me to do the grand and the generous! That is melodramatic after all! Because I only thought of myself, of myself alone, what! to save from a punishment perhaps a little too severe, but in reality just, nobody knows who, a thief, a scoundrel at any rate. Must an entire country be let go to ruin! must a poor hapless woman perish in the hospital! must a poor little girl perish on the street! like dogs! Ah! that would be abominable! And the mother not even see her child again! and the child hardly have known her mother! And all that for this old whelp of an apple-thief, who, beyond all doubt, deserves the galleys for something else, if not for this. Fine scruples these, which save an old vagabond who has, after all, only a few years to live, and who will hardly be more unhappy in the galleys than in his hovel, and which sacrifice a whole population, mothers, wives, children! This poor little Cosette who has no one but me in the world, and who is doubtless at this moment all blue with cold, in the hut of these Thenardiers! They too are miserable rascals! And I should fail in my duty towards all these poor beings! And I should go away and denounce myself! And I should commit this silly blunder! Take it at the very worst. Suppose there were a misdeed for me in this, and that my con-

science should some day reproach me ; the acceptance for the good of others of these reproaches which weigh only upon me of this misdeed which affects only my own soul, why, that is devotion, that is virtue."

He arose and resumed his walk. This time it seemed to him that he was satisfied.

Diamonds are found only in the dark places of the earth ; truths are found only in the depths of thought. It seemed to him that after having descended into these depths, after having groped long in the blackest of this darkness, he had at last found one of these diamonds, one of these truths, and that he held it in his hand ; and it blinded him to look at it.

"Yes," thought he, "that is it ! I am in the true road. I have the solution. I must end by holding fast to something. My choice is made. Let the matter alone ! No more vacillation, no more shrinking. This is in the interest of all, not in my own. I am Madeleine, I remain Madeleine. Woe to him who is Jean Valjean ! He and I are no longer the same, I do not recognize that man, I no longer know what he is ; if it is found that anybody is Jean Valjean at this hour let him take care of himself. That does not concern me. That is a fatal name which is floating about in the darkness ; if it stops and settles upon any man, so much the worse for that man."

He looked at himself in the little mirror that hung over his mantel-piece and said :

"Yes ! To come to a resolution has solaced me ! I am quite another man now !"

He took a few steps more, then he stopped short.

"Come !" said he, "I must not hesitate before any of the consequences of the resolution I have formed. There are yet some threads which knit me to this Jean Valjean. They must be broken ! There are, in this very room, objects which would accuse me, mute things which would be witnesses ; it is done, all these must disappear."

He felt in his pocket, drew out his purse, opened it, and took out a little key.

He put this key into a lock the hole of which was hardly visible, lost as it was in the darkest shading of the figures on the paper which covered the wall. A secret door opened ; a kind of false press built between the corner of the wall and the casing of the chimney. There was nothing in this closet but a few refuse trifles ; a blue smock-frock, an old pair of trousers, an old haversack, and a great thorn stick, iron-bound at both ends. Those who had seen Jean Valjean at the time he passed though D—, in October, 1815, would have recognized easily all the fragments of this miserable outfit.

He had kept them, as he had kept the silver candlesticks, to remind him at all times of what he had been. But he concealed what came from the galley, and left the candlesticks that came from the Bishop in sight.

He cast a furtive look towards the door, as if he were afraid it would open in spite of the bolt that held it ; then with a quick and hasty movement, and at a single armful, without even a glance at these things which he had kept so religiously and with so much danger during so many years, he took the whole, rags, stick, haversack, and threw them all into the fire.

He shut up the false press, and, increasing his precautions, henceforth useless, since it was empty, concealed the door behind a heavy piece of furniture which he pushed against it.

In a few seconds, the room and the wall opposite were lit up with a great, red, flickering glare. It was all burning ; the thorn stick cracked and threw out sparks into the middle of the room.

The haversack, as it was consumed with the horrid rags which it contained, left something uncovered which glistened in the ashes. By bending towards it, one could

have easily recognized a piece of silver. It was doubtless the forty-sous piece stolen from the little Savoyard.

But he did not look at the fire; he continued his walk to and fro, always at the same pace.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon the two silver candlesticks on the mantel, which were glistening dimly in the reflection.

“Stop!” thought he, “all Jean Valjean is contained in them too. They also must be destroyed.”

He took the two candlesticks.

There was fire enough to melt them quickly into an unrecognizable ingot.

He bent over the fire and warmed himself a moment. It felt really comfortable to him. “The pleasant warmth!” said he.

He stirred the embers with one of the candlesticks.

A minute more, and they would have been in the fire.

At that moment, it seemed to him that he heard a voice crying within him: “Jean Valjean!” “Jean Valjean!”

His hair stood on end; he was like a man who hears some terrible thing.

“Yes! that is it, finish!” said the voice, “complete what you are doing! destroy these candlesticks! annihilate this memorial! forget the bishop! forget all! ruin this Champmathieu, yes! very well. Applaud yourself! So it is arranged, it is determined, it is done. Behold a man, a greybeard who knows not what he is accused of, who has done nothing, it may be, an innocent man, whose only misfortune is caused by your name, upon whom your name weighs like a crime, who will be taken instead of you; will be condemned, will end his days in abjection and in horror! very well. Be an honoured man yourself. Remain, Monsieur Mayor, remain honourable and honoured, enrich the city, feed the poor, bring up the orphans, live happy, virtuous, and admired, and all this time while you

are here in joy and in the light, there shall be a man wearing your red blouse, bearing your name in ignominy, and dragging your chain in the galleys ! Yes ! this is a fine arrangement ! Oh, wretch !”

The sweat rolled off his forehead. He looked upon the candlesticks with haggard eyes. Meanwhile the voice which spoke within him had not ended. It continued :

“Jean Valjean ! there shall be about you many voices which will make great noise, which will speak very loud, and which will bless you ; and one only which nobody shall hear, and which will curse you in the darkness. Well, listen, wretch ! all these blessings shall fall before they reach Heaven ; only the curse shall mount into the presence of God !”

This voice, at first quite feeble, and which was raised from the most obscure depths of his conscience, had become by degrees loud and formidable, and he heard it now at his ear. It seemed to him that it had emerged from himself, and that it was speaking now from without. He thought he heard the last words so distinctly that he looked about the room with a kind of terror.

“Is there anybody here ?” asked he, aloud and in a startled tone.

Then he continued with a laugh, which was like the laugh of an idiot :

“What a fool I am ! there cannot be anybody here.”

There was One ; but He who was there was not of such as the human eye can see.

He put the candlesticks on the mantel.

Then he resumed this monotonous and dismal walk, which disturbed the man asleep beneath him in his dreams, and wakened him out of his sleep.

This walk soothed him and excited him at the same time. It sometimes seems that on the greatest occasions we put ourselves in motion in order to ask advice from

whatever we may meet by change of place. After a few moments he no longer knew where he was.

He now recoiled with equal terror from each of the resolutions which he had formed in turn. Each of the two ideas which counselled him, appeared to him as fatal as the other. What a fatality ! What a chance that this Champmathieu should be mistaken for him ! To be hurled down headlong by the very means which Providence seemed at first to have employed to give him full security.

There was a moment during which he contemplated the future. Denounce himself, great God ! Give himself up ! He saw with infinite despair all that he must leave, all that he must resume. He must then bid farewell to this existence, so good, so pure, so radiant ; to this respect of all, to honour, to liberty ! No more would he go out to walk in the fields, never again would he hear the birds singing in the month of May, never more give alms to the little children ! No longer would he feel the sweetness of looks of gratitude and of love ! He would leave this house that he had built, this little room ! Everything appeared charming to him now. He would read no more in these books, he would write no more on this little white wood table ! His old portress, the only servant he had, would no longer bring him his coffee in the morning. Great God ! instead of that, the galley-crew, the iron collar, the red blouse, the chain at his foot, fatigue, the dungeon, the plank-bed, all these horrors, which he knew so well ! At his age, after having been what he was ! If he were still young ! But so old, to be insulted by the first comer, to be tumbled about by the prison guard, to be struck by the jailer's stick ! To have his bare feet in iron-bound shoes ! To submit morning and evening his leg to the hammer of the roundsman who tests the fetters ! To endure the curiosity of strangers who would be told : *This one is the famous Jean Valjean, who was Mayor of M—— sur M—— !* At night,

dripping with sweat, overwhelmed with weariness, the green cap over his eyes, to mount two by two, under the sergeant's whip, the step-ladder of the floating prison ! Oh ! what wretchedness ! Can destiny then be malignant like an intelligent being, and become monstrous like the human heart ?

And do what he might, he always fell back upon this sharp dilemma which was at the bottom of his thought. To remain in paradise and there become a demon ! To re-enter into hell and there become an angel :

What shall be done, great God ! what shall be done ?

The torment from which he had emerged with so much difficulty, broke loose anew within him. His ideas again began to become confused. They took that indescribable, stupefied, and mechanical shape, which is peculiar to despair. The name of Romainville returned constantly to his mind, with two lines of a song he had formerly heard. He thought that Romainville is a little wood near Paris, where young lovers go to gather lilacs in the month of April.

He staggered without as well as within. He walked like a little child that is just allowed to go alone.

Now and then struggling against his fatigue, he made an effort again to arouse his intellect. He endeavoured to state finally and conclusively, the problem over which he had in some sort fallen exhausted. Must he denounce himself ? Must he be silent ? He could see nothing distinctly. The vague forms of all the reasonings thrown out by his mind trembled, and were dissipated one after another in smoke. But this much he felt, that by whichever resolve he might abide, necessarily, and without possibility of escape, something of himself would surely die ; that he was entering into a sepulchre on the right hand, as well as on the left ; that he was suffering a death-agony, the death-agony of his happiness, or the death-agony of his virtue.

Alas ! all his irresolutions were again upon him. He was no further advanced than when he began.

So struggled beneath its anguish this unhappy soul. Eighteen hundred years before this unfortunate man, the mysterious Being, in whom are aggregated all the sanctities and the sufferings of humanity, He also, while the olive trees were shivering in the fierce breath of the Infinite, had long put away from his hand the fearful chalice that appeared before him, dripping with shadow and running over with darkness, in the star-filled depths.

#### IV

##### FORMS ASSUMED BY SUFFERING DURING SLEEP.

THE clock struck three. For five hours he had been walking thus, almost without interruption, when he dropped into his chair.

He fell asleep and dreamed.

This dream, like most dreams, had no further relation to the condition of affairs than its mournful and poignant character, but it made an impression upon him. This nightmare struck him so forcibly that he afterwards wrote it down. It is one of the papers in his own handwriting, which he has left behind him. We think it our duty to copy it here literally.

Whatever this dream may be, the story of that night would be incomplete if we should omit it. It is the gloomy adventure of a sick soul.

It is as follows : Upon the envelope we find this line written : “*The dream that I had that night.*”

“I was in a field. A great sad field where there was no grass. It did not seem that it was day, nor that it was night.

“I was walking with my brother, the brother of my child

hood ; this brother of whom I must say that I never think, and whom I scarcely remember.

“ We were talking, and we met others walking. We were speaking of a neighbour we had formerly, who, since she had lived in the street, always worked with her window open. Even while we talked, we felt cold on account of that open window.

“ There were no trees in the field.

“ We saw a man passing near us. He was entirely naked, ashen-coloured, mounted upon a horse which was of the colour of earth. The man had no hair ; we saw his skull and the veins in his skull. In his hand he held a stick which was limber like a twig of grape vine, and heavy as iron. This horseman passed by and said nothing.

“ My brother said to me : ‘ Let us take the deserted road.’

“ There was a deserted road where we saw not a bush, nor even a sprig of moss. All was of the colour of earth, even the sky. A few steps further, and no one answered me when I spoke. I perceived that my brother was no longer with me.

“ I entered a village which I saw. I thought that it must be Romainville, (why Romainville?)\*

“ The first street by which I entered was deserted. I passed into a second street. At the corner of the two streets, was a man standing against the wall, I said to this man : ‘ What place is this ? Where am I ? ’ The man made no answer. I saw the door of a house open, I went in.

“ The first room was deserted. I entered the second. Behind the door of this room was a man standing against the wall. I asked this man, ‘ What house is this ? Where am I ? ’ The man made no answer. The house had a garden.

“ I went out of the house and into the garden. The garden was deserted. Behind the first tree I found a man

\* This parenthesis is in the hand of Jean Valjean.

standing. I said to this man: ‘What is this garden? Where am I?’ The man made no answer.

“I wandered about the village, and I perceived that it was a city. All the streets were deserted, all the doors were open. No living being was passing along the streets, or stirring in the rooms, or walking in the gardens. But behind every angle of a wall, behind every door, behind everything, there was a man standing who kept silence. But one could ever be seen at a time. These men looked at me as I passed by.

“I went out of the city and began to walk in the fields.

“After a little while, I turned and I saw a great multitude coming after me. I recognized all the men that I had seen in the city. Their heads were strange. They did not seem to hasten, and still they walked faster than I. They made no sound in walking. In an instant this multitude came up and surrounded me. The faces of these men were of the colour of earth.

“Then the first one whom I had seen and questioned on entering the city, said to me: ‘Where are you going? Do you not know that you have been dead for a long time?’

“I opened my mouth to answer, and I perceived that no one was near me.”

He awoke. He was chilly. A wind as cold as the morning wind made the sashes of the still open window swing on their hinges. The fire had gone out. The candle was low in the socket. The night was yet dark.

He arose and went to the window. There were still no stars in the sky.

From his window he could look into the court-yard and into the street. A harsh, rattling noise that suddenly resounded from the ground made him look down.

He saw below him two red stars, whose rays danced back and forth grotesquely in the shadow.

His mind was still half buried in the mist of his reverie:

"Yes!" thought he, "there are none in the sky. They are on the earth now."

This confusion, however, faded away; a second noise like the first awakened him completely; he looked, and he saw that these two stars were the lamps of a carriage. By the light which they emitted, he could distinguish the form of the carriage. It was a tilbury drawn by a small white horse. The noise which he had heard, was the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the pavement.

"What carriage is that?" said he to himself. "Who is it that comes so early?"

At that moment there was a low rap at the door of his room.

He shuddered from head to foot, and cried in a terrible voice:

"Who is there?"

Some one answered:

"I, Monsieur Mayor."

He recognized the voice of the old woman, his portress.

"Well," said he, "what is it?"

"Monsieur Mayor, it is just five o'clock."

"What is that to me?"

"Monsieur Mayor, it is the chaise."

"What chaise?"

"The tilbury."

"What tilbury?"

"Did not Monsieur the Mayor order a tilbury?"

"No," said he.

"The driver says that he has come for Monsieur the Mayor."

"What driver?"

"Monsieur Scaufflaire's driver."

"Monsieur Scaufflaire?"

That name startled him as if a flash had passed before his face.

"Oh, yes!" he said, "Monsieur Scaufflaire."

Could the old woman have seen him at that moment she would have been frightened.

There was a long silence. He examined the flame of the candle with a stupid air, and took some of the melted wax from around the wick and rolled it in his fingers. The old woman was waiting. She ventured, however, to speak again :

“ Monsieur Mayor, what shall I say ?”

“ Say that it is right, and I am coming down.”

## V.

### CLOGS IN THE WHEELS.

THE postal service from Arras to M—— sur M—— was still performed at this time by the little mail waggons of the date of the empire. These mail waggons were two-wheeled cabriolets, lined with buckskin, hung upon jointed springs, and having but two seats, one for the driver, the other for the traveller. The wheels were armed with those long threatening hubs which keep other vehicles at a distance, and which are still seen upon the roads of Germany. The letters were carried in a huge oblong box placed behind the cabriolet and making a part of it. This box was painted black and the cabriolet yellow.

These vehicles, which nothing now resembles, were indescribably misshapen and clumsy, and when they were seen from a distance crawling along some road in the horizon, they were like those insects called, I think, termites, which with a slender body draw a great train behind. They went, however, very fast. The mail that left Arras every night at one o'clock, after the passing of the courier from Paris, arrived at M—— sur M—— a little before five in the morning.

That night, the mail that came down to M—— sur M—— by the road from Hesdin, at the turn of a street just as it

was entering the city, ran against a little tilbury drawn by a white horse, which was going in the opposite direction, and in which there was only one person, a man wrapped in a cloak. The wheel of the tilbury received a very severe blow. The courier cried out to the man to stop, but the traveller did not listen and kept on his way at a rapid trot.

“There is a man in a devilish hurry!” said the courier.

The man who was in such a hurry was he whom we have seen struggling in such pitiable convulsions.

Where was he going? He could not have told. Why was he in haste? He did not know. He went forward at haphazard. Whither? To Arras, doubtless; but perhaps he was going elsewhere also. At moments he felt this, and he shuddered. He plunged into that darkness as into a yawning gulf. Something pushed him, something drew him on. What was passing within him, no one could describe, all will understand. What man has not entered, at least once in his life, into this dark cavern of the unknown?

But he had resolved upon nothing, decided nothing, determined nothing, done nothing. None of the acts of his conscience had been final. He was more than ever as at the first moment.

Why was he going to Arras?

He repeated what he had already said to himself when he engaged the cabriolet of Scaufflaire, that, whatever might be the result, there could be no objection to seeing with his own eyes, and judging of the circumstances for himself; that it was even prudent, that he ought to know what took place; that he could decide nothing without having observed and scrutinised; that in the distance every little thing seems a mountain; that after all, when he should have seen this Champmathieu, some wretch probably, his conscience would be very much reconciled to letting him go to the galleys in his place; that it was true that Javert would be there, and Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochepaille, old convicts who had

known him; but surely they would not recognize him; bah! what an idea! that Javert was a hundred miles off the track! that all conjectures and all suppositions were fixed upon this Champmathieu, and that nothing is so stubborn as suppositions and conjectures; that there was, therefore, no danger.

That it was no doubt a dark hour, but that he should get through it; that after all he held his destiny, evil as it might be, in his own hand; that he was master of it. He clung to that thought.

' In reality, to tell the truth, he would have preferred not to go to Arras.

Still he was on the way.

Although absorbed in thought, he whipped up his horse, which trotted away at that regular and sure full trot that gets over two leagues and a half an hour.

In proportion as the tilbury went forward, he felt something within him which shrank back.

At daybreak he was in the open country; the city of M—— sur M—— was a long way behind. He saw the horizon growing lighter; he beheld, without seeing them, all the frozen figures of a winter dawn pass before his eyes. Morning has its spectres as well as evening. He did not see them, but, without his consciousness, and by a kind of penetration which was almost physical, those black outlines of trees and hills added to the tumultuous state of his soul an indescribable gloom and apprehension.

Every time he passed one of the isolated houses that stood here and there by the side of the road, he said to himself: "But yet, there are people there who are sleeping!"

The trotting of the horse, the rattling of the harness, the wheels upon the pavement, made a gentle, monotonous sound. These things are charming when one is joyful, and mournful when one is sad.

It was broad day when he arrived at Hesdin. He stopped

before an inn to let his horse breathe and to have some oats given him.

This horse was, as Scaufflaire had said, of that small breed of the Boulonnais which has too much head, too much belly, and not enough neck, but which has an open chest, a large rump, fine and slender legs, and a firm foot; a homely race, but strong and sound. The excellent animal had made five leagues in two hours, and had not turned a hair.

He did not get out of the tilbury. The stable boy who brought the oats stooped down suddenly and examined the left wheel.

“Have you gone far so ?” said the boy.

He answered, almost without breaking up his train of thought :

“Why ?”

“Have you come far ?” said the boy.

“Five leagues from here.”

“Ah !”

“Why do you say : ah ?”

The boy stooped down again, was silent a moment, with his eye fixed on the wheel, then he rose up saying :

“To think that this wheel has just come five leagues, that is possible, but it is very sure that it won’t go a quarter of a league now.”

He sprang down from the tilbury.

“What do you say, my friend ?”

“I say that it is a miracle that you have come five leagues without tumbling, you and your horse, into some ditch on the way. Look for yourself.”

The wheel in fact was badly damaged. The collision with the mail waggon had broken two spokes and loosened the hub so that the nut no longer held.

“My friend,” said he to the stable-boy, “is there a wheelwright here ?”

“Certainly, monsieur.”

“ Do me the favour to go for him.”

“ There he is, close by. Halloa Master Bourgaillard !”

Master Bourgaillard the wheelwright was on his own doorstep. He came and examined the wheel, and made such a grimace as a surgeon makes at the sight of a broken leg.

“ Can you mend that wheel on the spot ?”

“ Yes, monsieur.”

“ When can I start again ?”

“ To-morrow.”

“ To-morrow !”

“ It is a good day’s work. Is monsieur in a great hurry ?”

“ A very great hurry. I must leave in an hour at the latest.”

“ Impossible, monsieur.”

“ I will pay whatever you like.”

“ Impossible.”

“ Well ! in two hours.”

“ Impossible to-day. There are two spokes and a hub to be repaired. Monsieur cannot start again before to-morrow.”

“ My business cannot wait till to-morrow. Instead of mending this wheel, cannot it be replaced ?”

“ How so ?”

“ You are a wheelwright ?”

“ Certainly, monsieur.”

“ Have not you a wheel to sell me ? I could start away at once.”

“ A wheel to exchange ?”

“ Yes.”

“ I have not a wheel made for your cabriolet. Two wheels make a pair. Two wheels don’t go together haphazard.”

“ In that case, sell me a pair of wheels.”

“ Monsieur, every wheel doesn’t go on to every axle.”

“ But try.”

“ It’s of no use, monsieur. I have nothing but cart wheels to sell. We are a small place here.”

“Have you a cabriolet to let?”

The wheelwright, at the first glance, had seen that the tilbury was a hired vehicle. He shrugged his shoulders.

“You take good care of the cabriolets that you hire! I should have one a good while before I would let it to you.”

“Well, sell it to me.”

“I have not one.”

“What! not even a carriole? I am not hard to suit, as you see.”

“We are a little place. True, I have under the old shed there,” added the wheelwright, “an old chaise that belongs to a citizen of the place, who has given it to me to keep, and who uses it every 29th of February. I would let it to you, of course it is nothing to me. The citizen must not see it go by, and then, it is clumsy; it would take two horses.”

“I will take two post-horses.”

“Where is monsieur going?”

“To Arras.”

“And monsieur would like to get there to-day?”

“I would.”

“By taking post-horses?”

“Why not?”

“Will Monsieur be satisfied to arrive by four o’clock to-morrow morning?”

“No, indeed.”

“I mean, you see, that there is something to be said in taking post-horses. Monsieur has his passport?”

“Yes.”

“Well, by taking post-horses, monsieur will not reach Arras before to-morrow. We are a cross-road. The relays are poorly served, the horses are in the fields. The ploughing season has just commenced; heavy teams are needed, and the horses are taken from everywhere, from the post as well as elsewhere. Monsieur will have to wait at

least three or four hours at each relay, and then they go at a walk. There are a good many hills to climb."

"Well, I will go on horseback. Unhitch the cabriolet. Somebody in the place can surely sell me a saddle."

"Certainly, but will this horse go under the saddle?"

"It is true, I had forgotten it, he will not."

"Then —"

"But I can surely find in the village a horse to let?"

"A horse to go to Arras at one trip?"

"Yes."

"It would take a better horse than there is in our parts. You would have to buy him too, for nobody knows you. But neither to sell nor to let, neither for five hundred francs nor for a thousand, will you find such a one."

"What shall I do?"

"The best thing to do, like a sensible man, is that I mend the wheel and you continue your journey to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late."

"Confound it!"

"Is there no mail that goes to Arras? When does it pass?"

"To-night. Both mails make the trip in the night, the up mail as well as the down."

"How! must you take a whole day to mend this wheel?"

"A whole day, and a long one!"

"If you set two workmen at it?"

"If I should set ten."

"If you should tie the spokes with cords?"

"The spokes I could, but not the hub. And then the tire is also in bad condition, too."

"Is there no livery stable in the city?"

"No."

"Is there another wheelwright?"

The stable boy and the wheelwright answered at the same time, with a shake of the head—

“No.”

He felt an immense joy.

It was evident that Providence was in the matter. It was Providence that had broken the wheel of the tilbury and stopped him on his way. He had not yielded to this sort of first summons ; he had made all possible efforts to continue his journey ; he had faithfully and scrupulously exhausted every means ; he had shrunk neither before the season, nor from fatigue, nor from expense ; he had nothing for which to reproach himself. If he went no further, it no longer concerned him. It was now not his fault ! it was, not the act of his conscience, but the act of Providence.

He breathed. He breathed freely and with a full chest for the first time since Javert's visit. It seemed to him that the iron hand which had gripped his heart for twenty hours was relaxed.

It appeared to him that now God was for him, was manifestly for him.

He said to himself that he had done all that he could, and that now he had only to retrace his steps, tranquilly.

If his conversation with the wheelwright had taken place in a room of the inn, it would have had no witnesses, nobody would have heard it, the matter would have rested there, and it is probable that we should not have had to relate any of the events which follow, but that conversation occurred in the street. Every colloquy in the street inevitably gathers a circle. There are always people who ask nothing better than to be spectators. While he was questioning the wheelwright, some of the passers-by had stopped around them. After listening for a few minutes, a young boy whom no one had noticed, had separated from the group and ran away.

At the instant the traveller, after the internal deliberation which we have just indicated, was making up his mind to

go back, this boy returned. He was accompanied by an old woman.

“Monsieur,” said the woman, “my boy tells me that you are anxious to hire a cabriolet.”

This simple speech, uttered by an old woman who was brought there by a boy, made the sweat pour down his back. He thought he saw the hand he was but now freed from reappear in the shadow behind him, all ready to seize him again.

He answered :

“Yes, good woman, I am looking for a cabriolet to hire.”

And he hastened to add :

“But there is none in the place.”

“Yes, there is,” said the dame.

“Where is it, then?” broke in the wheelwright.

“At my house,” replied the dame.

He shuddered. The fatal hand had closed upon him again.

The old woman had, in fact, under a shed, a sort of willow carriole. The blacksmith and the boy at the inn, angry that the traveller should escape them, intervened.

“It was a frightful go-cart, it had no springs, it was true the seat was hung inside with leather straps, it would not keep out the rain, the wheels were rusty and rotten, it couldn’t go much further than the tilbury, a real jumper ! This gentleman would do very wrong to set out in it,” &c., &c.

This was all true, but this go-cart, this jumper, this thing, whatever it might be, went upon two wheels and could go to Arras.

He paid what was asked, left the tilbury to be mended at the blacksmith’s against his return, had the white horse harnessed to the carriole, got in, and resumed the route he had followed since morning.

The moment the carriole started, he acknowledged that

he had felt an instant before a certain joy at the thought that he should not go where he was going. He examined that joy with a sort of anger, and thought it absurd. Why should he feel joy at going back? After all, he was making a journey of his own accord, nobody forced him to it.

And certainly, nothing could happen which he did not choose to have happen.

As he was leaving Hesdin, he heard a voice crying out : "Stop! stop!" He stopped the carriole with a hasty movement, in which there was still something strangely feverish and convulsive which resembled hope.

It was the dame's little boy.

"Monsieur," said he, "it was I who got the carriole for you."

"Well!"

"You have not given me anything."

He, who gave to all, and so freely, felt this claim was exorbitant and almost odious.

"Oh! is it you, you beggar?" said he, "you shall have nothing!"

He whipped up the horse and started away at a quick trot.

He had lost a good deal of time at Hesdin, he wished to make it up. The little horse was plucky, and pulled enough for two; but it was February, it had rained, the roads were bad. And then, it was no longer the tilbury. The carriole ran hard, and was very heavy. And besides, there were many steep hills.

He was almost four hours going from Hesdin to Saint Pol. Four hours for six leagues.

At Saint Pol he drove to the nearest inn, and had the horse taken to the stable. As he had promised Scaufflaire, he stood near the manger while the horse was eating. He was thinking of things sad and confused.

The innkeeper's wife came into the stable.

“Does not Monsieur wish breakfast?”

“Why, it is true,” said he, “I have a good appetite.”

He followed the woman, who had a fresh and pleasant face. She led him into a low hall, where there were some tables covered with oilcloth.

“Be quick,” said he, “I must start again. I am in a hurry.”

A big Flemish servant girl waited on him in all haste. He looked at the girl with a feeling of comfort.

“This is what ailed me,” thought he. “I had not breakfasted.”

His breakfast was served. He seized the bread, bit a piece, then slowly put it back on the table, and did not touch anything more.

A teamster was eating at another table. He said to this man:

“Why is their bread so bitter?”

The teamster was German, and did not understand him.

He returned to the stable to his horse.

An hour later he had left Saint Pol, and was driving towards Tinques, which is but five leagues from Arras.

What was he doing during the trip? What was he thinking about? As in the morning, he saw the trees pass by, the thatched roofs, the cultivated fields, and the dissolving views of the country which change at every turn of the road. Such scenes are sometimes sufficient for the soul, and almost do away with thought. To see a thousand objects for the first and for the last time, what can be deeper and more melancholy? To travel, is to be born and to die at every instant. It may be that in the most shadowy portion of his mind, he was drawing a comparison between these changing horizons and human existence. All the facts of life are perpetually in flight before us. Darkness and light alternate with each other. After a flash, an eclipse; we look, we hasten, we stretch out our hands to seize what is passing; every event is a turn of the road; and all at once we

are old. We feel a slight shock, all is black, we distinguish a dark door, this gloomy horse of life which was carrying us stops, and we see a veiled and unknown form that turns him out into the darkness.

Twilight was falling just as the children coming out of school beheld our traveller entering Tinques. It is true that the days were still short. He did not stop at Tinques. As he was driving out of the village, a countryman who was repairing the road, raised his head and said :

“Your horse is very tired.”

The poor beast, in fact, was not going faster than a walk.

“Are you going to Arras?” added the countryman.

“Yes.”

“If you go at this rate, you won’t get there very early.”

He stopped his horse and asked the countryman :

“How far is it from here to Arras?”

“Near seven long leagues.”

“How is that? the post route only counts five and a quarter.”

“Ah!” replied the workman, “then you don’t know that the road is being repaired. You will find it cut off a quarter of an hour from here. There’s no means of going further.

“Indeed!”

“You will take the left, the road that leads to Carency, and cross the river; when you are at Camblin, you will turn to the right; that is the road from Mont Saint-Eloy to Arras.”

“But it is night, I shall lose my way.”

“You are not of these parts?”

“No.”

“Besides, they are all cross-roads.”

“Stop, Monsieur,” the countryman continued, “do you want I should give you some advice? Your horse is tired; go back to Tinques. There is a good house there. Sleep there. You can go on to Arras to-morrow.”

“I must be there to-night—this evening.”

"That is another thing. Then go back all the same to that inn, and take an extra horse. The boy that will go with the horse will guide you through the cross-roads."

He followed the countryman's advice, retraced his steps, and a half-hour afterwards he again passed the same place, but at a full trot, with a good extra horse. A stable-boy who called himself a postilion, was sitting upon the shaft of the carriole.

He felt, however, that he was losing time. It was now quite dark.

They were driving through a cross-path. The road became frightful. The carriole tumbled from one rut to the other. He said to the postilion :

"Keep up a trot, and double drink-money."

In one of the jolts the whiffle-tree broke.

"Monsieur," said the postilion, "the whiffle-tree is broken; I do not know how to harness my horse now, this road is very bad at night, if you will come back and stop at Tinques, we can be at Arras early to-morrow morning."

He answered : "Have you a piece of string and a knife?"

"Yes, Monsieur."

He cut off the limb of a tree and made a whiffle-tree of it.

This was another loss of twenty minutes ; but they started off at a full gallop.

The plain was dark. A low fog, thick and black, was creeping over the hill-tops and floating away like smoke. There were glimmering flashes from the clouds. A strong wind, which came from the sea, made a sound all around the horizon like the moving of furniture. Everything that he caught a glimpse of had an attitude of terror. How all things shudder under the terrible breath of night.

The cold penetrated him. He had not eaten since the evening before. He recalled vaguely to mind his other night adventure in the great plain near D——, eight years before ; and it seemed yesterday to him.

Some distant bell struck the hour. He asked the boy :

“What o’clock is that?”

“Seven o’clock, Monsieur; we shall be in Arras at eight. We have only three leagues.”

At this moment he thought for the first time, and it seemed strange that it had not occurred to him sooner; that perhaps all the trouble he was taking might be useless; that he did not even know the hour of the trial; that he should at least have informed himself of that; that it was foolish to be going on at this rate, without knowing whether it would be of any use. Then he figured out some calculations in his mind: that ordinarily the sessions of the Courts of Assize began at nine o’clock in the morning; that this case would not occupy much time; this apple-stealing would be very short; that there would be nothing but a question of identity; four or five witnesses, and some little to be said by the lawyers; that he would get there after it was all over!

The postilion whipped up the horses. They had crossed the river, and left Mont Saint-Eloy behind them.

The night grew darker and darker.

## VI.

### SISTER SIMPLICE PUT TO THE PROOF.

MEANWHILE, at that very moment, Fantine was in ecstasies.

She had passed a very bad night. Cough frightful, fever redoubled; she had bad dreams. In the morning, when the doctor came, she was delirious. He appeared to be alarmed, and asked to be informed as soon as Monsieur Madeleine came.

All the morning she was low-spirited, spoke little and was making folds in the sheets, murmuring in a low voice over some calculations which appeared to be calculations of distances. Her eyes were hollow and fixed. The light seemed almost gone out, but then, at moments, they would be lighted up and sparkle like stars. It seems as though at the approach

of a certain dark hour, the light of heaven infills those who are leaving the light of earth.

Whenever Sister Simplice asked her how she was, she answered invariably: "Well. I would like to see Monsieur Madeleine."

A few months earlier, when Fantine had lost the last of her modesty, her last shame and her last happiness, she was the shadow of herself; now she was the spectre of herself. Physical suffering had completed the work of moral suffering. This creature of twenty-five years had a wrinkled forehead, flabby cheeks, pinched nostrils, shrivelled gums, a leaden complexion, a bony neck, protruding collar-bones, skinny limbs, an earthly skin, and her fair hair was mixed with grey. Alas! how sickness extemporises old age.

At noon the doctor came again, left a few prescriptions, inquired if the Mayor had been at the infirmary, and shook his head.

Monsieur Madeleine usually came at three o'clock to see the sick woman. As exactitude was kindness, he was exact.

About half-past two, Fantine began to be agitated. In the space of twenty minutes, she asked the nun more than ten times: "My sister, what time is it?"

The clock struck three. At the third stroke, Fantine rose up in bed—ordinarily she could hardly turn herself—she joined her two shrunken and yellow hands in a sort of convulsive clasp, and the nun heard from her one of those deeps sighs which seem to uplift a great weight. Then Fantine turned and looked towards the door.

Nobody came in; the door did not open.

She sat so for a quarter of an hour, her eyes fixed upon the door, motionless, and as if holding her breath. The Sister dared not speak. The church clock struck the quarter. Fantine fell back upon her pillow.

She said nothing, and again began to make folds in the sheet.

A half-hour passed, then an hour, but no one came ; every time the clock struck, Fantine rose and looked towards the door, then she fell back.

Her thought could be clearly seen, but she pronounced no name, she did not complain, she found no fault. She only coughed mournfully. One would have said that something dark was settling down upon her. She was livid, and her lips were blue. She smiled at times.

The clock struck five. Then the sister heard her speak very low and gently : “ But since I am going away to-morrow, he does wrong not to come to-day ! ”

Sister Simplice herself was surprised at Monsieur Madeleine’s delay.

Meanwhile, Fantine was looking at the canopy of her bed. She seemed to be seeking to recall something to her mind. All at once she began to sing in a voice as feeble as a whisper. The nun listened. This is what Fantine sang :

We will buy very pretty things,  
A-walking through the faubourgs.

Violets are blue, roses are red :  
Violets are blue, I love my loves.

The Virgin Mary to my bed  
Came yesterday in broidered cloak  
And told me : “ Here hidden in my veil  
Is the babe that once you asked of me.”  
Run to the town, get linen,  
Buy thread, buy a thimble.

We will buy very pretty things.  
A-walking through the faubourgs.

Good holy Virgin, by my bed  
I have put a eradle, draped with ribbons ;  
Were God to give me his fairest star,  
I should love the babe thou hast given me more.  
“ Madame, what shall be done with this linen ? ”  
“ Make a trousseau for my new-born.”

Violets are blue, roses are red :  
Violets are blue, I love my loves.

Wash this linen, "Where?" "In the river."  
Make of it, without spoiling or soiling,  
A pretty skirt, a very long skirt,  
Which I will broider and fill with flowers.  
"The child is gone, madame, what more?"  
"Make of it a shroud to bury me."

We will buy very pretty things  
A-walking in the faubourgs.  
Violets are blue, roses are red:  
Violets are blue, I love my loves.

It was an old nursery song with which she once used to sing her little Cosette to sleep, and which had not occurred to her mind for the five years since she had had her child with her. She sang it in a voice so sad, and to an air so sweet, that it could not but draw tears even from a nun. The Sister, accustomed to austerity as she was, felt a drop upon her cheek.

The clock struck six. Fantine did not appear to hear. She seemed no longer to pay attention to anything around her.

Sister Simplice sent a girl to inquire of the portress of the factory if the Mayor had come in, and if he would not very soon come to the infirmary. The girl returned in a few minutes.

Fantine was still motionless, and appeared to be absorbed in her own thoughts.

The servant related in a whisper to Sister Simplice that the Mayor had gone away that morning before six o'clock in a little tilbury drawn by a white horse, cold as the weather was; that he went alone, without even a driver, that no one knew the road he had taken, that some said he had been seen to turn off by the road to Arras, that others were sure they had met him on the road to Paris. That when he went away he seemed, as usual, very kind, and that he simply said to the portress that he need not be expected that night.

While the two women were whispering, with their backs turned towards Fantine's bed, the Sister questioning, the servant conjecturing, Fantine, with that feverish vivacity of certain organic diseases, which unites the free movement of health with the frightful exhaustion of death, had risen to her knees on the bed, her shrivelled hands resting on the bolster, and with her head passing through the opening of the curtains, she listened. All at once she exclaimed :

“ You are talking there of Monsieur Madeleine ! why do you talk so low ? what has he done ? why does he not come ? ”

Her voice was so harsh and rough that the two women thought they heard the voice of a man ; they turned towards her affrighted.

“ Why don't you answer ? ” cried Fantine.

The servant stammered out :

“ The portress told me that he could not come to-day.”

“ My child,” said the Sister, “ be calm, lie down again.”

Fantine, without changing her attitude, resumed with a loud voice, and in a tone at once piercing and imperious :

“ He cannot come. Why not ? You know the reason. You were whispering it there between you. I want to know.”

The servant whispered quickly in the nun's ear : “ Answer that he is busy with the City Council.”

Sister Simplice reddened slightly ; it was a lie that the servant had proposed to her. On the other hand, it did seem to her that to tell the truth to the sick woman would doubtless be a terrible blow, and that it was dangerous in the state in which Fantine was. This blush did not last long. The Sister turned her calm, sad eye upon Fantine, and said :

“ The Mayor has gone away.”

Fantine sprang up and sat upon her feet. Her eyes sparkled. A marvellous joy spread over that mournful face.

"Gone away!" she exclaimed. "He has gone for Cosette!"

Then she stretched her hands towards heaven, and her whole countenance became ineffable. Her lips moved; she was praying in a whisper.

When her prayer was ended: "My sister," said she, "I am quite willing to lie down again, I will do whatever you wish; I was naughty just now, pardon me for having talked so loud; it is very bad to talk loud; I know it, my good sister, but see how happy I am. God is kind, Monsieur Madeleine is good; just think of it, that he has gone to Montfermeil for my little Cosette."

She lay down again, helped the nun to arrange the pillow, and kissed a little silver cross which she wore at her neck, and which Sister Simplice had given her.

"My child," said the Sister, "try to rest now, and do not talk any more."

Fantine took the Sister's hand between hers; they were moist; the Sister was pained to feel it.

"He started this morning for Paris. Indeed he need not even go through Paris. Montfermeil is a little to the left in coming. You remember what he said yesterday, when I spoke to him about Cosette: *Very soon, very soon!* This is a surprise he has for me. You know he had me sign a letter to take her away from the Thenardiers. They will have nothing to say, will they? They will give up Cosette. Because they have their pay. The authorities would not let them keep a child when they are paid. My sister, do not make signs to me that I must not talk. I am very happy, I am doing very well. I have no pain at all, I am going to see Cosette again, I am hungry even. For almost five years I have not seen her. You do not, you cannot imagine what a hold children have upon you! And then she will be so handsome, you will see! If you knew, she has such pretty little rosy fingers! First she will have very

beautiful hands. At a year old she had ridiculous hands—so! She must be large now. She is seven years old. She is a little lady. I call her Cosette, but her name is Euphrasie. Now, this morning I was looking at the dust on the mantel, and I had an idea that I should see Cosette again very soon! Oh, dear! how wrong it is to be years without seeing one's children! We ought to remember that life is not eternal! Oh! how good it is in the Mayor to go—true, it is very cold! He had his cloak, at least! He will be here to-morrow, will he not? That will make to-morrow a fête. To-morrow morning, my sister, you will remind me to put on my little lace cap. Montfermeil is a country place. I made the trip on foot once. It was a long way for me. But the diligences go very fast. He will be here to-morrow with Cosette! How far is it from here to Montfermeil?"

The Sister, who had no idea of the distance, answered : "Oh! I feel sure that he will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow! to-morrow!" said Fantine, "I shall see Cosette to-morrow! See, good Sister of God, I am well now. I am wild; I would dance, if anybody wanted me to."

One who had seen her a quarter of an hour before could not have understood this. Now she was all rosy; she talked in a lively, natural tone; her whole face was only a smile. At times she laughed while whispering to herself. A mother's joy is almost like a child's.

"Well," resumed the nun, "now you are happy obey me—do not talk any more."

Fantine laid her head upon the pillow, and said in a low voice: "Yes, lie down again; be prudent now that you are going to have your child. Sister Simplice is right. All here are right."

And then, without moving or turning her head, she began to look all about with her eyes wide open and a joyous air, and she said nothing more.

The Sister closed the curtains, hoping that she would sleep.

Between seven and eight o'clock the doctor came. Hearing no sound, he supposed that Fantine was asleep, went in softly, and approached the bed on tiptoe. He drew the curtains aside, and by the glimmer of the twilight he saw Fantine's large calm eyes looking at him.

She said to him : "Monsieur, you will let her lie by my side in a little bed, won't you ?"

The doctor thought she was delirious. She added :

"Look, there is just room."

The doctor took Sister Simplex aside, who explained the matter to him, that Monsieur Madeleine was absent for a day or two, and that, not being certain, they had not thought it best to undeceive the sick woman, who believed the Mayor had gone to Montfermeil ; that it was possible, after all, that she had guessed aright. The doctor approved of this.

He returned to Fantine's bed again, and she continued :

"Then you see, in the morning, when she wakes, I can say good morning to the poor kitten ; and at night, when I am awake, I can hear her sleep. Her little breathing is so sweet it will do me good."

"Give me your hand," said the doctor.

She reached out her hand, and exclaimed, with a laugh :

"Oh, stop ! Indeed, it is true you don't know ! but I am cured. Cosette is coming to-morrow."

The doctor was surprised. She was better. Her languor was less. Her pulse was stronger. A sort of new life was all at once reanimating this poor exhausted being.

"Doctor," she continued, "has the Sister told you that Monsieur the Mayor has gone for the little thing ?"

The doctor recommended silence, and that she should avoid all painful emotion. He prescribed an infusion of pure quinine, and, in case the fever should return in the

night, a soothing potion. As he was going away he said to the Sister : “She is better. If by good fortune the Mayor should really come back to-morrow with the child, who knows? there are such astonishing crises; we have seen great joy instantly cure diseases; I am well aware that this is an organic disease, and far advanced, but this is all such a mystery! We shall save her perhaps!”

## VII.

### THE TRAVELLER ARRIVES AND PROVIDES FOR HIS RETURN.

IT was nearly eight o’clock in the evening when the carriole which we left on the road drove into the yard of the Hotel de la Poste at Arras. The man whom we have followed thus far, got out, answered the hospitalities of the inn’s people with an absent-minded air, sent back the extra horse, and took the little white one to the stable himself; then he opened the door of a billiard-room on the first floor, took a seat, and leaned his elbows on a table. He had spent fourteen hours in this trip, which he expected to make in six. He did himself the justice to feel that it was not his fault; but at bottom he was not sorry for it.

The landlady entred.

“Will Monsieur have a bed? will Monsieur have supper?”

He shook his head.

“The stable-boy says that Monsieur’s horse is very tired!”

Here he broke silence.

“Is not the horse able to start again to-morrow morning?”

“Oh! Monsieur! he needs at least two days’ rest.”

He asked :

“Is not the Bureau of the Post here?”

“Yes, sir.”

The hostess led him to the Bureau ; he showed his passport and inquired if there were an opportunity to return that very night to M—— sur M—— by the mail coach ; only one seat was vacant, that by the side of the driver ; he retained it and paid for it. “Monsieur,” said the booking clerk, “don’t fail to be here ready to start at precisely one o’clock in the morning.”

This done, he left the hotel and began to walk in the city.

He was not acquainted in Arras, the streets were dark, and he went hap-hazard. Nevertheless he seemed to refrain obstinately from asking his way. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow streets, where he was soon lost. A citizen came along with a lantern. After some hesitation, he determined to speak to this man, but not until he had looked before and behind, as if he were afraid that somebody might overhear the question he was about to ask.

“Monsieur,” said he, “the Court House, if you please?”

“You are not a resident of the city, Monsieur,” answered the citizen, who was an old man, “well, follow me, I am going right by the Court-House, that is to say the City Hall. For they are repairing the Court House just now, and the Courts are holding their sessions at the City Hall, temporarily.”

“Is it there,” asked he, “that the Assizes are held?”

“Certainly, Monsieur; you see, what is the City Hall today was the Bishop’s palace before the Revolution. Monsieur de Conzié, who was bishop in ’Eighty-two, had a large hall built. The Court is held in that hall.”

As they walked along, the citizen said to him :

“If Monsieur wishes to see a trial, he is rather late. Ordinarily the sessions close at six o’clock.”

However, when they reached the great square, the citizen showed him four long lighted windows on the front of a vast dark building.

“ Faith, Monsieur, you are in time, you are fortunate. Do you see those four windows? that is the Court of Assizes. There is a light there. Then they have not finished. The case must have been prolonged and they are having an evening session. Are you interested in this case? Is it a criminal trial? Are you a witness?”

He answered :

“ I have no business ; I only wish to speak to a lawyer.”

“ That’s another thing,” said the citizen. “ Stop, Monsieur, here is the door. The doorkeeper is up there. You have only to go up the grand stairway.”

He followed the citizen’s instructions, and in a few minutes found himself in a hall where there were many people, and scattered groups of lawyers in their robes whispering here and there.

It is always a chilling sight to see these gatherings of men clothed in black, talking among themselves in a low voice on the threshold of the chamber of justice. It is rare that charity and pity can be found in their words. What are oftenest heard are sentences pronounced in advance. All these groups seem to the observer, who passes musingly by, like so many gloomy hives where buzzing spirits are building in common all sorts of dark structures.

This hall, which, though spacious, was lighted by a single lamp, was an ancient hall of the Episcopal palace, and served as a waiting-room. A double folding door, which was now closed, separated it from the large room in which the Court of Assizes was in session.

The obscurity was such that he felt no fear in addressing the first lawyer whom he met.

“ Monsieur,” said he, “ how are they getting along ?”

“ It is finished,” said the lawyer.

“ Finished !”

The word was repeated in such a tone that the lawyer turned around.

“Pardon me, Monsieur, you are a relative, perhaps?”

“No. I know no one here. And was there a sentence?”

“Of course. It was hardly possible for it to be otherwise.”

“To hard labour?”

“For life.”

He continued in a voice so weak that it could hardly be heard :

“The identity was established, then?”

“What identity?” responded the lawyer. “There was no identity to be established. It was a simple affair. This woman had killed her child, the infanticide was proven, the jury were not satisfied that there was any premeditation ; she was sentenced for life.”

“It is a woman, then?” said he.

“Certainly. The Limosin girl. What else are you speaking of?”

“Nothing, but if it is finished, why is the hall still lighted up?”

“That is for the other case, which commenced nearly two hours ago.”

“What other case?”

“Oh ! that is a clear one also. It is a sort of a thief, a second offender, a galley slave, a case of robbery. I forget his name. He looks like a bandit. Were it for nothing but having such a face, I would send him to the galleys.”

“Monsieur,” asked he, “is there any means of getting into the hall ?”

“I think not, really. There is a great crowd. However, they are taking a recess. Some people have come out, and when the session is resumed, you can try.”

“How do you get in ?”

“Through that large door.”

The lawyer left him. In a few moments he had undergone, almost at the same time, almost together, all possible

emotions. The words of this indifferent man had alternately pierced his heart like icicles and like flames of fire. When he learned that it was not concluded, he drew breath ; but he could not have told whether what he felt was satisfaction or pain.

He approached several groups and listened to their talk. The calendar of the term being very heavy, the judge had set down two short, simple cases for that day. They had begun with the infanticide, and now were on the convict, the second offender, the "old stager." This man had stolen some apples, but that did not appear to be very well proven; what was proven, was that he had been in the galleys at Toulon. This was what ruined his case. The examination of the man had been finished, and the testimony of the witnesses had been taken ; but there yet remained the argument of the counsel, and the summing up of his prosecuting attorney; it would hardly be finished before midnight. The man would probably be condemned ; the prosecuting attorney was very good, and never *failed* with his prisoners ; he was a fellow of talent, who wrote poetry.

An officer stood near the door which opened into the court-room. He asked this officer :

" Monsieur, will the door be opened soon ?"

" It will not be opened," said the officer.

" How ! it will not be opened when the session is resumed ? is there not a recess ?"

" The session has just been resumed," answered the officer, " but the door will not be opened again."

" Why not ?"

" Because the hall is full."

" What ! there are no more seats ?"

" Not a single one. The door is closed. No one can enter."

The officer added, after a silence : " There are indeed two or three places still behind Monsieur the Judge, but

Monsieur the Judge admits none but public functionaries to them."

So saying, the officer turned his back.

He retired with his head bowed down, crossed the ante-chamber, and walked slowly down the staircase, seeming to hesitate at every step. It is probable that he was holding counsel with himself. The violent combat that had been going on within him since the previous evening was not finished ; and, every moment, he fell upon some new turn. When he reached the turn of the stairway, he leaned against the railing and folded his arms. Suddenly he opened his coat, drew out his pocket-book, took out a pencil, tore out a sheet, and wrote rapidly upon that sheet, by the glimmering light, this line : *Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——* ; then he went up the stairs again rapidly, passed through the crowd, walked straight to the officer, handed him the paper, and said to him with authority : "Carry that to Monsieur the Judge."

The officer took the paper, cast his eye upon it, and obeyed.

## VIII.

### ADMISSION BY FAVOUR.

WITHOUT himself suspecting it, the Mayor of M—— sur M—— had a certain celebrity. For seven years the reputation of his virtue had been extending throughout Bas-Boulonnais ; it had finally crossed the boundaries of the little county, and had spread into the two or three neighbouring departments. Besides the considerable service that he had rendered to the chief town by reviving the manufacture of jet-work, there was not one of the hundred and forty-one communes of the district of M—— sur M—— which was not indebted to him for some benefit. He had even in case of need aided and quickened the business of

the other districts. Thus he had, in time of need, sustained with his credit and with his own funds the tulle factory at Boulogne, the flax-spinning factory at Frévent, and the linen factory at Boubiers-sur-Canche. Everywhere the name of Monsieur Madeleine was spoken with veneration. Arras and Douai envied the lucky little city of M—— sur M—— its mayor.

The Judge of the Royal Court of Douai, who was holding this term of the Assizes at Arras, was familiar, as well as everybody else, with this name so profoundly and so universally honoured. When the officer, quietly opening the door which led from the council chamber to the court room, bent behind the judge's chair and handed him the paper, on which was written the line we have just read, adding : “*This gentleman desires to witness the trial;*” the judge made a hasty movement of deference, seized a pen, wrote a few words at the bottom of the paper and handed it back to the officer, saying to him : “Let him enter.”

The unhappy man, whose history we are relating, had remained near the door of the hall, in the same place and the same attitude as when the officer left him. He heard, through his thoughts, some one saying to him : “Will monsieur do me the honour to follow me?” It was the same officer who had turned his back upon him the minute before, and who now bowed to the earth before him. The officer at the same time handed him the paper. He unfolded it, and, as he happened to be near the lamp, he could read :

“The Judge of the Court of Assizes presents his respects to Monsieur Madeleine.”

He crushed the paper in his hands, as if those few words had left some strange and bitter taste behind.

He followed the officer.

In a few minutes he found himself alone in a kind of panelled cabinet, of a severe appearance, lighted by two wax candles placed upon a table covered with green cloth.

The last words of the officer who had left him still rang in his ear: "Monsieur, you are now in the council chamber; you have but to turn the brass knob of that door and you will find yourself in the court room, behind the Judge's chair." These words were associated in his thoughts with a vague remembrance of the narrow corridors and dark stairways through which he had just passed.

The officer had left him alone. The decisive moment had arrived. He endeavoured to collect his thoughts, but did not succeed. At those hours especially when we have sorest need of grasping the sharp realities of life do the threads of thought snap off in the brain. He was in the very place where the judges deliberate and decide. He beheld with a stupid tranquillity that silent and formidable room where so many existences had been terminated, where his own name would be heard so soon, and which his destiny was crossing at this moment. He looked at the walls, then he looked at himself, astonished that this could be this chamber, and that this could be he.

He had eaten nothing for more than twenty-four hours; he was bruised by the jolting of the carriage, but he did not feel it; it seemed to him that he felt nothing.

He examined a black frame which hung on the wall, and which contained under glass an old autograph letter of Jean Nicolas Pache, Mayor of Paris, and Minister, dated, doubtless by mistake, June 9th, year II., in which Pache sent to the Commune the list of the ministers and deputies held in arrest within their limits. A spectator, had he seen and watched him then, would have imagined, doubtless, that this letter appeared very remarkable to him, for he did not take his eyes off from it, and he read it two or three times. He was reading without paying any attention, and without knowing what he was doing. He was thinking of Fantine and Cosette.

Even while musing, he turned unconsciously, and his

eyes encountered the brass knob of the door which separated him from the hall of the Assizes. He had almost forgotten that door. His countenance, at first calm, now fell. His eyes were fixed on that brass knob, then became set and wild, and little by little filled with dismay. Drops of sweat started out from his head, and rolled down over his temples.

At one moment, he made, with a kind of authority united to rebellion, that indescribable gesture which means and which so well says : *Well! who is there to compel me?* Then he turned quickly, saw before him the door by which he had entered, went to it, opened it, and went out. He was no longer in that room ; he was outside, in a corridor, a long, narrow corridor, cut up with steps and side-doors, making all sorts of angles, lighted here and there by lamps hung on the wall similar to nurse-lamps for the sick ; it was the corridor by which he had come. He drew breath and listened ; no sound behind him, no sound before him ; he ran as if he were pursued.

When he had doubled several of the turns of this passage, he listened again. There was still the same silence and the same shadow about him. He was out of breath, he tottered, he leaned against the wall. The stone was cold ; the sweat was icy upon his forehead ; he roused himself with a shudder.

Then and there, alone, standing in that obscurity, trembling with cold and, perhaps, with something else, he reflected.

He had reflected all night, he had reflected all day ; he now heard but one voice within him, which said : Alas !

A quarter of an hour thus rolled away. Finally, he bowed his head, sighed with anguish, let his arms fall, and retraced his steps. He walked slowly and as if overwhelmed. It seemed as if he had been caught in his flight and brought back,

He entered the council chamber again. The first thing that he saw was the handle of the door. That handle, round and of polished brass, shone out before him like an ominous star. He looked at it as a lamb might look at the eye of a tiger.

His eyes could not move from it.

From time to time, he took another step towards the door.

Had he listened, he would have heard, as a kind of confused murmur, the noise of the neighbouring hall; 'but he did not listen and he did not hear.

Suddenly, without himself knowing how, he found himself near the door, he seized the knob convulsively: the door opened.

He was in the court room.

## IX.

### A PLACE FOR ARRIVING AT CONVICTIONS.

HE took a step, closed the door behind him, mechanically, and remained standing, noting what he saw.

It was a large hall, dimly lighted, and noisy and silent by turns, where all the machinery of a criminal trial was exhibited, with its petty, yet solemn gravity, before the multitude.

At one end of the hall, that at which he found himself, heedless judges, in threadbare robes, were biting their finger-nails, or closing their eyelids; at the other end, was a ragged rabble; there were lawyers in all sorts of attitudes; soldiers with honest and hard faces; old, stained wains-coating, a dirty ceiling, tables covered with serge, which was more nearly yellow than green; doors blackened by finger-marks; tavern lamps, giving more smoke than light, on nails in the panelling; candles, in brass candlesticks, on

the tables ; everywhere obscurity, unsightliness, and gloom ; and from all this there arose an austere and august impression ; for men felt therein the presence of that great human thing which is called law, and that great divine thing which is called justice.

No man in this multitude paid any attention to him. All eyes converged on a single point, a wooden bench placed against a little door, along the wall at the left hand of the judge. Upon this bench, which was lighted by several candles, was a man between two gendarmes.

This was the man.

He did not look for him, he saw him. His eyes went towards him naturally, as if they had known in advance where he was.

He thought he saw himself, older, doubtless, not precisely the same in features, but alike in attitude and appearance, with that bristling hair, with those wild and restless eyeballs, with that blouse—just as he was on the day he entered D—, full of hatred, and concealing in his soul this hideous hoard of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in gathering upon the floor of the galleys.

He said to himself, with a shudder : “Great God ! shall I again come to this ?”

This being appeared at least sixty years old. There was something indescribably rough, stupid, and terrified, in his appearance.

At the sound of the door, people had stood aside to make room. The judge had turned his head, and supposing the person who entered to be the Mayor of M— sur M—, greeted him with a bow. The prosecuting attorney, who had seen Madeleine at M— sur M—, whither he had been called more than once, by the duties of his office, recognized him and bowed likewise. He scarcely perceived them. He gazed about him, a prey to a sort of hallucination.

Judges, clerk, gendarmes, a throng of heads, cruelly curious—he had seen all these once before, twenty-seven years ago. He had fallen again upon these fearful things ; they were before him, they moved, they had being ; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his fancy, but real gendarmes and real judges, a real throng, and real men of flesh and bone. It was done ; he saw reappearing and living again around him, with all the frightfulness of reality, the monstrous visions of the past.

All this was yawning before him.

Stricken with horror, he closed his eyes, and exclaimed from the depths of his soul : “Never !”

And by a tragic sport of destiny, which was agitating all his ideas and rendering him almost insane, it was another self before him. This man on trial was called by all around him, Jean Valjean !

He had before his eyes an unheard-of vision, a sort of representation of the most horrible moment of his life, played by his shadow.

All, everything was there—the same paraphernalia, the same hour of the night—almost the same faces, judge and assistant judges, soldiers and spectators. But above the head of the Judge was a crucifix, a thing which did not appear in court rooms at the time of his sentence. When he was tried, God was not there.

A chair was behind him ; he sank into it, terrified at the idea that he might be observed. When seated, he took advantage of a pile of papers on the judges' desk to hide his face from the whole room. He could now see without being seen. He entered fully into the spirit of the reality ; by degrees he recovered his composure, and arrived at that degree of calmness at which it is possible to listen.

Monsieur Bamatabois was one of the jurors.

He looked for Javert, but did not see him. The witnesses' seat was hidden from him by the clerks' table,

And then, as we have just said, the hall was very dimly lighted.

At the moment of his entrance, the counsel for the prisoner was finishing his plea. The attention of all was excited to the highest degree ; the trial had been in progress for three hours. During these three hours, the spectators had seen a man, an unknown, wretched being, thoroughly stupid or thoroughly artful, gradually bending beneath the weight of a terrible probability. This man, as is already known, was a vagrant who had been found in a field, carrying off a branch, laden with ripe apples, which had been broken from a tree in a neighbouring close, called the Pierron inclosure. Who was this man ? An examination had been held, witnesses had been heard, they had been unanimous, light had been elicited from every portion of the trial. The prosecution said : “We have here, not merely a fruit thief, a marauder ; we have here, in our hands, a bandit, an outlaw who has broken his ban, an old convict, a most dangerous wretch, a malefactor, called Jean Valjean, of whom justice has been long in pursuit, and who, eight years ago, on leaving the galleys at Toulon, committed a highway robbery, with force and arms, upon the person of a youth of Savoy, Little Gervais by name, a crime which is specified in Article 383 of the Penal Code, and for which we reserve the right of further prosecution when his identity shall be judicially established. He has now committed a new theft. It is a case of second offence. Convict him for the new crime ; he will be tried hereafter for the previous one.” Before this accusation, before the unanimity of the witnesses, the principal emotion evinced by the accused was astonishment. He made gestures and signs which signified denial, or he gazed at the ceiling. He spoke with difficulty, and answered with embarrassment, but from head to foot, his whole person denied the charge. He seemed like an idiot in the presence of all these intel-

lects ranged in battle around him, and like a stranger in the midst of this society by whom he had been seized. Nevertheless, a most threatening future awaited him ; probabilities increased every moment ; and every spectator was looking with more anxiety than himself for the calamitous sentence which seemed to be hanging over his head with ever increasing surety. One contingency even gave a glimpse of the possibility, beyond the galleys, of a capital penalty should his identity be established, and the Little Gervais affair result in his conviction. Who was this man ? What was the nature of his apathy ? Was it imbecility or artifice ? Did he know too much or nothing at all ? These were questions upon which the spectators took sides, and which seemed to affect the jury. There was something fearful and something mysterious in the trial ; the drama was not merely gloomy, but it was obscure.

The counsel for the defence had made a very good plea in that provincial language which long constituted the eloquence of the bar, and which was formerly employed by all lawyers, at Paris as well as at Romorantin or Montbrison, but which, having now become classic, is used by few except the official orators of the bar, to whom it is suited by its solemn rotundity and majestic periods ; a language in which husband and wife are called *spouses*, Paris, *the centre of arts and civilization*, the king, *the monarch*, a bishop, *a holy pontiff*, the prosecuting attorney, *the eloquent interpreter of the vengeance of the law*, arguments, *the accents which we have just heard*, the time of Louis XIV., *the illustrious age*, a theatre, *the temple of Melpomene*, the reigning family, *the august blood of our kings*, a concert, *a musical solemnity*, the general in command, *the illustrious warrior who*, etc., students of theology, *those tender Levites*, mistakes imputed to newspapers, *the imposture which distils its venom into the columns of these organs*, etc., etc. The counsel for the defence had begun by expatiating on the theft of the apples,—a thing

ill suited to a lofty style ; but Benign Bossuet himself was once compelled to make allusion to a hen in the midst of a funeral oration, and acquitted himself with dignity. The counsel established that the theft of the apples was not in fact proved. His client, whom in his character of counsel he persisted in calling Champmathieu, had not been seen to scale the wall or break off the branch. He had been arrested in possession of this branch (which the counsel preferred to call *bough*) ; but he said that he had found it on the ground. Where was the proof to the contrary ? Undoubtedly this branch had been broken and carried off after the scaling of the wall, then thrown away by the alarmed marauder ; undoubtedly, there had been a thief.—But what evidence was there that this thief was Champmathieu ? One single thing. That he was formerly a convict. The counsel would not deny that this fact unfortunately appeared to be fully proved ; the defendant had resided at Faverolles ; the defendant had been a pruner, the name of Champmathieu might well have had its origin in that of Jean Mathieu ; all this was true, and finally, four witnesses had positively and without hesitation identified Champmathieu as the galley slave, Jean Valjean ; to these circumstances and this testimony, the counsel could oppose nothing but the denial of his client, an interested denial ; but even supposing him to be the convict Jean Valjean, did this prove that he had stolen the apples ? that was a presumption at most, not a proof. The accused, it was true, and the counsel “in good faith” must admit it, had adopted “a mistaken system of defence.” He had persisted in denying everything, both the theft and the fact that he had been a convict. An avowal on the latter point would have been better certainly, and would have secured to him the indulgence of the judges ; the counsel had advised him to this course, but the defendant had obstinately refused, expecting probably to escape punishment entirely, by

admitting nothing. It was a mistake, but must not the poverty of his intellect be taken into consideration? The man was evidently imbecile. Long suffering in the galleys, long suffering out of the galleys, had brutalized him, etc., etc.; if he made a bad defence, was this a reason for convicting him? As to the Little Gervais affair, the counsel had nothing to say, it was not in the case. He concluded by entreating the jury and court, if the identity of Jean Valjean appeared evident to them, to apply to him the police penalties prescribed for the breaking of ban, and not the fearful punishment decreed to the convict found guilty of a second offence.

The prosecuting attorney replied to the counsel for the defence. He was violent and flowery, like most prosecuting attorneys.

He complimented the counsel for his “frankness,” of which he shrewdly took advantage. He attacked the accused through all the concessions which his counsel had made. The counsel seemed to admit that the accused was Jean Valjean. He accepted the admission. This man then was Jean Valjean. This fact was conceded to the prosecution, and could be no longer contested. Here, by an adroit autonomasia, going back to the sources and causes of crime, the prosecuting attorney thundered against the immorality of the romantic school—then in its dawn, under the name of the *Satanic school*, conferred upon it by the critics of the *Quotidienne* and the *Oriflamme*; and he attributed, not without plausibility, to the influence of this perverse literature, the crime of Champmathieu, or rather of Jean Valjean. These considerations exhausted, he passed to Jean Valjean himself. Who was Jean Valjean? Description of Jean Valjean: a monster vomited, etc. The model of all such descriptions may be found in the story of Théramène, which as tragedy is useless, but which does great service in judicial eloquence every day. The auditory and the jury “shuddered.” This

description finished, the prosecuting attorney resumed with an oratorical burst, designed to excite the enthusiasm of the *Journal de la Préfecture* to the highest pitch next morning. "And it is such a man," etc., etc. A vagabond, a mendicant, without means of existence, etc., etc. Accustomed through his existence to criminal acts, and profiting little by his past life in the galleys, as is proved by the crime committed upon Little Gervais, etc., etc. It is such a man who, found on the highway in the very act of theft, a few paces from a wall that had been scaled, still holding in his hand the subject of his crime, denies the act in which he is caught, denies the theft, denies the escalade, denies everything, denies even his name, denies even his identity! Besides a hundred other proofs, to which we will not return, he is identified by four witnesses—Javert—the incorruptible inspector of police, Javert—and three of his former companions in disgrace, the convicts Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochevaille. What has he to oppose to this overwhelming unanimity? His denial. What depravity! You will do justice gentlemen of the jury, etc., etc. While the prosecuting attorney was speaking, the accused listened open-mouthed, with a sort of astonishment, not unmixed with admiration. He was evidently surprised that a man could speak so well. From time to time, at the most "forcible" parts of the argument, at those moments when eloquence, unable to contain itself, overflows in a stream of withering epithets, and surrounds the prisoner like a tempest, he slowly moved his head from right to left, and from left to right—a sort of sad, mute protest, with which he contented himself from the beginning of the argument. Two or three times the spectators nearest him heard him say in a low tone: "This all comes from not asking for Monsieur Baloup!" The prosecuting attorney pointed out to the jury this air of stupidity, which was evidently put on, and which denoted, not imbecility, but address, artifice, and the habit of deceiving justice;

and which showed in its full light the “deep-rooted perversity” of the man. He concluded by reserving entirely the Little Gervais affair, and demanding a sentence to the full extent of the law.

This was, for this offence, as will be remembered, hard labour for life.

The counsel for the prisoner rose, commenced by complimenting “Monsieur, the prosecuting attorney, on his admirable argument,” then replied as best he could, but in a weaker tone ; the ground was evidently giving away under him.

## X.

### THE SYSTEM OF DENEGATIONS.

THE time had come for closing the case. The judge commanded the accused to rise, and put the usual question : “Have you anything to add to your defence?”

The man, standing, and twirling in his hands a hideous cap which he had, seemed not to hear.

The Judge repeated the question.

This time, the man heard, and appeared to comprehend. He started like one awaking from sleep, cast his eyes around him, looked at the spectators, the gendarmes, his counsel, the jurors, and the Court, placed his huge fist on the bar before him, looked around again, and suddenly fixing his eyes upon the prosecuting attorney, began to speak. It was like an eruption. It seemed from the manner in which the words escaped his lips, incoherent, impetuous, jostling each other pell-mell, as if they were all eager to find vent at the same time. He said :

“I have this to say : That I have been a wheelwright at Paris ; that it was at M. Baloup’s too. It is a hard life to be a wheelwright, you always work out-doors, in yards, under sheds when you have good masters, never in shops, because you must have room, you see. In the winter, it is

so cold that you thresh your arms to warm them ; but the masters won't allow that ; they say it is a waste of time. It is tough work to handle iron when there is ice on the pavements. It wears a man out quick. You get old when you are young at this trade. A man is used up by forty. I was fifty-three ; I was often ill. And then the workmen are so bad ! When a poor fellow isn't young, they always call you old bird, and old beast ! I earned only thirty sous a day, they paid me as little as they could—the masters took advantage of my age. Then I had my daughter, who was a washerwoman at the river. She earned a little for herself ; between us two, we got on ; she had hard work too. All day long up to the waist in a tub, in rain, in snow, with wind that cuts your face when it freezes, it is all the same, the washing must be done ; there are folks who havn't much linen and are waiting for it ; if you don't wash you lose your customers. The planks are not well matched, and the water falls on you everywhere. You get your clothes wet through and through ; that strikes in. She washed too in the laundry of the Enfants-Rouges, where the water comes in through pipes. There you are not in the tub. You wash before you under the pipe, and rinse behind you in the trough. This is under cover, and you are not so cold. But there is a hot lye that is terrible and ruins your eyes. She would come home at seven o'clock at night, and go to bed right away, she was so tired. Her husband used to beat her. She is dead. We were not very happy. She was a good girl ; she never went to balls, and was very quiet. I remember one Shrove Tuesday she went to bed at eight o'clock. Look here, I am telling the truth. You have only to ask if 'tisn't so. Ask ! how stupid I am ! Paris is a gulf. Who is there that knows Father Champmathieu ? But there is M. Baloup. Go and see M. Baloup. I don't know what more you want of me."

The man ceased speaking, but did not sit down. He had

uttered these sentences in a loud, rapid, hoarse, harsh, and guttural tone, with a sort of angry and savage simplicity. Once, he stopped to bow to somebody in the crowd. The sort of affirmations which he seemed to fling out hap-hazard, came from him like hiccoughs, and he added to each the gesture of a man chopping wood. When he had finished, the auditory burst into laughter. He looked at them, and seeing them laughing and not knowing why, began to laugh himself.

That was an ill omen.

The Judge, a considerate and kindly man, raised his voice :

He reminded “gentlemen of the jury” that M. Baloup, the former master wheelwright by whom the prisoner said he had been employed, had been summoned, but had not appeared. He had become bankrupt, and could not be found. Then, turning to the accused, he adjured him to listen to what he was about to say, and added: “ You are in a position which demands reflection. The gravest presumptions are weighing against you, and may lead to fatal results. Prisoner, on your own behalf, I question you a second time; explain yourself clearly on these two points: First, did you or did you not climb the wall of the Pierron close, break off the branch and steal the apples, that is to say, commit the crime of theft, with the addition of breaking into an inclosure? Secondly, are you or are you not the discharged convict, Jean Valjean?”

The prisoner shook his head with a knowing look, like a man who understands perfectly, and knows what he is going to say. He opened his mouth, turned towards the presiding judge, and said :

“ In the first place——.”

Then he looked at his cap, looked up at the ceiling, and was silent.

“ Prisoner,” resumed the prosecuting attorney, in an austere tone, “ give attention. You have replied to nothing

that has been asked you. Your agitation condemns you. It is evident that your name is not Champmathieu, but that you are the convict, Jean Valjean, disguised under the name at first, of Jean Mathieu, which was that of his mother ; that you have lived in Auvergne ; that you were born at Faverolles, where you were a pruner. It is evident that you have stolen ripe apples from the Pierron close, with the addition of breaking into the inclosure. The gentlemen of the jury will consider this."

The accused had at last resumed his seat ; he rose abruptly when the prosecuting attorney had ended, and exclaimed :

" You are a very bad man, you, I mean. That is what I wanted to say. I couldn't think of it first off. I never stole anything. I am a man who don't get something to eat every day. I was coming from Ailly, walking alone after a shower, which had made the ground all yellow with mud, so that the ponds were running over, and you only saw little sprigs of grass sticking out of the sand along the road, and I found a broken branch on the ground with apples on it ; and I picked it up, not knowing what trouble it would give me. It is three months that I have been in prison, being knocked about. More'n that, I can't tell. You talk against me and tell me 'answer !' The gendarme, who is a good fellow, nudges my elbow, and whispers 'answer now.' I can't explain myself ; I never studied ; I am a poor man. You are all wrong not to see that I didn't steal. I picked up off the ground things that was there. You talk about Jean Valjean, Jean Mathieu—I don't know any such people. They must be villagers. I have worked for Monsieur Baloup, Boulevard de l'Hopital. My name is Champmathieu. You must be very sharp to tell me where I was born. I don't know myself. Everybody can't have houses to be born in : that would be too handy. I think my father and mother were strollers, but I don't know. When I was a

child they called me Little One : now, they call me Old Man. They're my Christian names. Take them as you like. I have been in Auvergne, I have been at Faverolles. Bless me ! can't a man have been in Auvergne and Faverolles without having been at the galleys ? I tell you I never stole, and that I am Father Champmathieu. I have been at Monsieur Baloup's ; I lived in his house. I am tired of your everlasting nonsense. What is everybody after me for like a mad dog ? ”

The prosecuting attorney was still standing ; he addressed the judge :

“ Sir, in the presence of the confused but very adroit denegations of the accused, who endeavours to pass for an idiot, but who will not succeed in it—we will prevent him—we request that it may please you and the court to call again within the bar, the convicts, Brevet, Cochepaille, and Chenildieu, and police-inspector Javert, and to submit them to a final interrogation, concerning the identity of the accused with the convict Jean Valjean.”

“ I must remind the prosecuting attorney,” said the presiding judge, “ that police-inspector Javert, recalled by his duties to the chief town of a neighbouring district, left the hall, and the city also, as soon as his testimony was taken. We granted him this permission, with the consent of the prosecuting attorney and the counsel of the accused.”

“ True,” replied the prosecuting attorney ; “ in the absence of Monsieur Javert, I think it a duty to recall to the gentlemen of the jury what he said here a few hours ago. Javert is an estimable man, who does honour to inferior but important functions, by his rigorous and strict probity. These are the terms in which he testified : ‘ I do not even need moral presumptions and material proofs to contradict the denials of the accused. I recognize him perfectly. This man's name is not Champmathieu ; he is a convict Jean Valjean, very hard, and much feared. He

was liberated at the expiration of his term, but with extreme regret. He served out nineteen years at hard labour for burglary ; five or six times he attempted to escape. Besides the Little Gervais and Pierron robberies, I suspect him also of a robbery committed on his highness, the late Bishop of D——. I often saw him when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. I repeat it ; I recognize him perfectly."

This declaration, in terms so precise, appeared to produce a strong impression upon the public and jury. The prosecuting attorney concluded by insisting that, in the absence of Javert, the three witnesses, Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille, should be heard anew and solemnly interrogated.

The judge gave an order to an officer, and a moment afterwards the door of the witness-room opened, and the officer, accompanied by a gendarme ready to lend assistance, led in the convict Brevet. The audience was in breathless suspense, and all hearts palpitated as if they contained but a single soul.

The old convict Brevet was clad in the black and grey jacket of the central prisons. Brevet was about sixty years old ; he had the face of a man of business, and the air of a rogue. They sometimes go together. He had become something like a turnkey in the prison—to which he had been brought by new misdeeds. He was one of those men of whom their superiors are wont to say, "He tries to make himself useful." The chaplain bore good testimony to his religious habits. It must not be forgotten that this happened under the Restoration.

"Brevet," said the judge, "you have suffered infamous punishment, and cannot take an oath."

Brevet cast down his eyes.

"Nevertheless," continued the judge, "even in the man whom the law has degraded there may remain, if divine justice permit, a sentiment of honour and equity. To that

sentiment I appeal in this decisive hour. If it still exist in you, as I hope, reflect before you answer me ; consider on the one hand this man, whom a word from you may destroy ; on the other hand, justice, which a word from you may enlighten. The moment is a solemn one, and there is still time to retract if you think yourself mistaken. Prisoner, rise. Brevet, look well upon the prisoner ; collect your remembrances, and say, on your soul and conscience, whether you still recognize this man as your former comrade in the galleys, Jean Valjean."

Brevet looked at the prisoner, then turned again to the court.

"Yes, your honour, I was the first to recognize him, and still do so. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796, and left in 1815. I left a year after. He looks like a brute now, but he must have grown stupid with age ; at the galleys he was sullen. I recognize him now, positively."

"Sit down," said the judge. "Prisoner, remain standing."

Chenildieu was brought in, a convict for life, as was shown by his red cloak and green cap. He was undergoing his punishment in the galleys of Toulon, whence he had been brought for this occasion. He was a little man, about fifty years old, active, wrinkled, lean, yellow, brazen, restless, with a sort of sickly feebleness in his limbs and whole person, and an immense force in his eye. His companions in the galleys had nicknamed him Je-nie-Dieu.

The judge addressed nearly the same words to him as to Brevet. When he reminded him that his infamy had deprived him of the right to take an oath, Chenildieu raised his head and looked the spectators in the face. The judge requested him to collect his thoughts, and asked him, as he had Brevet, whether he still recognized the prisoner,

Chenildieu burst out laughing.

"Gad ! do I recognize him ! we were five years on the same chain. You're sulky with me, are you, old boy ?"

"Sit down," said the judge.

The officer brought in Cochebaille ; this other convict for life, brought from the galleys and dressed in red like Chenildieu, was a peasant from Lourdes, and a semi-bear of the Pyrenees. He had tended flocks in the mountains, and from shepherd had glided into brigandage. Cochebaille was not less uncouth than the accused, and appeared still more stupid. He was one of those unfortunate men whom nature turns out as wild beasts, and society finishes up into galley slaves.

The judge attempted to move him by a few serious and pathetic words, and asked him, as he had the others, whether he still recognized without hesitation or difficulty the man standing before him.

"It is Jean Valjean," said Cochebaille. "The same they called Jean-the-Jack, he was so strong."

Each of the affirmations of these three men, evidently sincere and in good faith, had excited in the audience a murmur of evil augury for the accused—a murmur which increased in force and continuance, every time a new declaration was added to the preceding one. The prisoner himself listened to them with that astonished countenance which, according to the prosecution, was his principal means of defence. At the first, the gendarmes by his side heard him mutter between his teeth : "Ah, well ! there is one of them !" After the second, he said in a louder tone, with an air almost of satisfaction, "Good !" At the third, he exclaimed, "Famous !"

The judge addressed him :

"Prisoner, you have listened. What have you to say ?"

He replied :

"I say—famous!"

A buzz ran through the crowd and almost invaded the jury. It was evident that the man was lost.

"Officers," said the judge, "enforce order. I am about to sum up the case."

At this moment there was a movement near the judge. A voice was heard exclaiming :

"Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochevaille, look this way!"

So lamentable and terrible was this voice, that those who heard it, felt their blood run cold. All eyes turned towards the spot whence it came. A man, who had been sitting among the privileged spectators behind the Court had risen, pushed open the low door which separated the tribunal from the bar, and was standing in the centre of the hall. The judge, the prosecuting attorney, Monsieur Bamatabois, twenty persons recognized him, and exclaimed at once :

"Monsieur Madeleine!"

## XI.

### CHAMPMATHIEU MORE AND MORE ASTONISHED.

IT was he, indeed. The clerk's lamp lighted up his face. He held his hat in hand; there was no disorder in his dress; his overcoat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale, and trembled slightly. His hair, already grey when he came to Arras, was now perfectly white. It had become so during the hour that he had been there. All eyes were strained towards him.

The sensation was indescribable. There was a moment of hesitation in the auditory. The voice had been so thrilling, the man standing there appeared so calm, that at first nobody could comprehend it. They asked who had cried out. They could not believe that this tranquil man had uttered that fearful cry.

This indecision lasted but a few seconds. Before even the judge and prosecuting attorney could say a word, before the gendarmes and officers could make a sign, the man whom all up to this moment called Monsieur Madeleine, had advanced towards the witnesses, Cochepaille, Brevet, and Chenildieu.

“Do you not recognize me?” said he.

All three stood confounded, and indicated by a shake of the head that they did not know him. Cochepaille, intimidated, gave the military salute. Monsieur Madeleine turned towards the jurors and Court, and said in a mild voice :

“Gentlemen of the jury, release the accused. Your Honour, order my arrest. He is not the man whom you seek; it is I. I am Jean Valjean.”

Not a breath stirred. To the first commotion of astonishment, had succeeded a sepulchral silence. That species of religious awe was felt in the hall which thrills the multitude at the accomplishment of a grand action.

Nevertheless, the face of the judge was marked with sympathy and sadness; he exchanged glances with the prosecuting attorney, and a few whispered words with the assistant judges. He turned to the spectators and asked in a tone which was understood by all :

“Is there a physician here?”

The prosecuting attorney continued :

“Gentlemen of the jury, the strange and unexpected incident which disturbs the audience, inspires us, as well as yourselves, with a feeling which we have no need to express. You all know, at least by reputation, the honourable Monsieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——. If there be a physician in the audience, we unite with his Honour the Judge in entreating him to be kind enough to lend his assistance to Monsieur Madeleine and conduct him to his residence.”

Monsieur Madeleine did not permit the prosecuting attorney to finish, but interrupted him with a tone full of gentleness and authority. These are the words he uttered ; we give them literally, as they were written down immediately after the trial by one of the witnesses of the scene—as they still ring in the ears of those who heard them, now nearly forty years ago.

“I thank you, Monsieur Prosecuting Attorney, but I am not mad. You shall see. You were on the point of committing a great mistake ; release that man. I am accomplishing a duty ; I am the unhappy convict. I am the only one who sees clearly here, and I tell you the truth. What I do at this moment, God beholds from on high, and that is sufficient. You can take me, since I am here. Nevertheless, I have done my best. I have disguised myself under another name, I have become rich, I have become a mayor, I have desired to enter again among honest men. It seems that this cannot be. In short, there are many things which I cannot tell. I shall not relate to you the story of my life ; some day you will know it. I did rob Monsieur the Bishop—that is true ; I did rob Little Gervais—that is true. They were right in telling you that Jean Valjean was a wicked wretch. But all the blame may not belong to him. Listen, your Honours ; a man so abased as I, has no remonstrance to make with Providence, nor advice to give to society ; but, mark you, the infamy from which I have sought to rise is pernicious to men. The galleys make the galley-slave. Receive this in kindness, if you will. Before the galleys, I was a poor peasant, unintelligent, a species of idiot ; the galleys changed me. I was stupid, I became wicked ; I was a log, I became a firebrand. Later, I was saved by indulgence and kindness, as I had been lost by severity. But, pardon, you cannot comprehend what I say. You will find in my house, among the ashes of the fire-place, the forty-sous piece of which, seven years ago, I robbed Little

Gervais. I have nothing more to add. Take me. Great God! the prosecuting attorney shakes his head. You say, ‘Monsieur Madeleine has gone mad;’ you do not believe me! This is hard to be borne. Do not condemn that man, at least. What! these men do not know me! Would that Javert was here. He would recognize me!”

Nothing could express the kindly yet terrible melancholy of the tone which accompanied these words.

He turned to the three convicts :

“Well! I recognize you, Brevet, do you remember——”

He paused, hesitated a moment, and said :

“Do you remember those checkered, knit suspenders that you had in the galleys?”

Brevet started as if struck with surprise, and gazed wildly at him from head to foot. He continued :

“Chenildieu, surnamed by yourself Je-nie-Dieu, the whole of your left shoulder has been burned deeply, from laying it one day on a chafing-dish full of embers, to efface the three letters T. F. P., which yet are still to be seen there. Answer me, is this true?”

“It is true!” said Chenildieu.

He turned to Cochevaille :

“Cochevaille, you have on your left arm, near where you have been bled, a date put in blue letters with burnt powder. It is the date of the landing of the Emperor at Cannes, *March 1st, 1815*. Lift up your sleeve.”

Cochevaille lifted up his sleeve ; all eyes around him were turned to his naked arm. A gendarme brought a lamp ; the date was there.

The unhappy man turned towards the audience and the court with a smile, the thought of which still rends the hearts of those who witnessed it. It was the smile of triumph ; it was also the smile of despair.

“You see clearly,” said he, “that I am Jean Valjean.”

There were no longer either judges, or accusers, or gen-

darmes in the hall ; there were only fixed eyes and beating hearts. Nobody remembered longer the part which he had to play ; the prosecuting attorney forgot that he was there to prosecute, the judge that he was there to preside, the counsel for the defence that he was there to defend. Strange to say no question was put, no authority intervened. It is the peculiarity of sublime spectacles that they take possession of every soul, and make of every witness a spectator. Nobody, perhaps, was positively conscious of what he experienced ; and, undoubtedly, nobody said to himself that he there beheld the effulgence of a great light, yet all felt dazzled at heart.

It was evident that Jean Valjean was before their eyes. That fact shone forth. The appearance of this man had been enough fully to clear up the case, so obscure a moment before. Without need of any further explanation, the multitude, as by a sort of electric revelation, comprehended instantly, and at a single glance, this simple and magnificent story of a man giving himself up that another might not be condemned in his place. The details, the hesitation, the slight reluctance possible were lost in this immense, luminous fact.

It was an impression which quickly passed over, but for the moment it was irresistible.

“I will not disturb the proceeding further,” continued Jean Valjean. “I am going, since I am not arrested. I have many things to do. Monsieur the prosecuting attorney knows where I am going, and will have me arrested when he chooses.”

He walked towards the outer door. Not a voice was raised, not an arm stretched out to prevent him. All stood aside. There was at this moment an indescribable divinity within him which makes the multitudes fall back and make way before a man. He passed through the throng with slow steps. It was never known who opened the door, but it

is certain that the door was open when he came to it. On reaching it he turned and said :

“ Monsieur the prosecuting attorney, I remain at your disposal.”

He then addressed himself to the auditory.

“ You all, all who are here, think me worthy of pity, do you not? Great God ! when I think of what I have been on the point of doing, I think myself worthy of envy. Still, would that all this had not happened !”

He went out, and the door closed as it had opened, for those who do deeds sovereignly great are always sure of being served by somebody in the multitude.

Less than an hour afterwards, the verdict of the jury discharged from all accusation the said Champmathieu ; and Champmathieu, set at liberty forthwith, went his way stupefied, thinking all men mad, and understanding nothing of this vision.





## Book Eighth

### C O U N T E R - S T R O K E

#### I.

IN WHAT MIRROR M. MADELEINE LOOKED AT HIS HAIR.

DAY began to dawn. Fantine had had a feverish and sleepless night, yet full of happy visions ; she fell asleep at daybreak. Sister Simplice, who had watched with her, took advantage of this slumber to go and prepare a new potion of quinine. The good Sister had been for a few moments in the laboratory of the infirmary, bending over her vials and drugs, looking at them very closely on account of the mist which the dawn casts over all objects, when suddenly she turned her head, and uttered a faint cry. M. Madeleine stood before her. He had just come in silently.

“You, Monsieur the Mayor !” she exclaimed.

“How is the poor woman ?” he answered in a low voice.

“Better just now. But we have been very anxious indeed.”

She explained what had happened, that Fantine had been very ill the night before, but was now better, because she believed that the Mayor had gone to Montfermeil for her

child. The Sister dared not question the Mayor, but she saw clearly from his manner that he had not come from that place.

"That is well," said he. "You did right not to undeceive her."

"Yes," returned the Sister, "but now, Monsieur the Mayor, when she sees you without her child, what shall we tell her?"

He reflected for a moment, then said,—

"God will inspire us."

"But, we cannot tell her a lie," murmured the Sister, in a smothered tone.

The broad daylight streamed into the room, and lighted up the face of M. Madeleine.

The Sister happened to raise her eyes.

"O God, Monsieur," she exclaimed. "What has befallen you? Your hair is all white!"

"White!" said he.

Sister Simplice had no mirror; she rummaged in a case of instruments, and found a little glass which the physician of the infirmary used to discover whether the breath had left the body of a patient. M. Madeleine took the glass, looked at his hair in it, and said, "Indeed!"

He spoke the word with indifference, as if thinking of something else.

The Sister felt chilled by an unknown something, of which she caught a glimpse in all this.

He asked, "Can I see her?"

"Will not Monsieur the Mayor bring back her child?" asked the Sister, scarcely daring to venture a question.

"Certainly, but two or three days are necessary."

"If she does not see Monsieur the Mayor here," continued the Sister timidly, "she will not know that he has returned; it will be easy for her to have patience, and when the child comes, she will think naturally that Monsieur the

Mayor has just arrived with her. Then we will not have to tell her a falsehood."

Monsieur Madeleine seemed to reflect for a few moments, then said with his calm gravity :

"No, my sister, I must see her. Perhaps I have not much time."

The nun did not seem to notice this "perhaps," which gave an obscure and singular significance to the words of Monsieur the Mayor. She answered, lowering her eyes and voice respectfully :

"In that case, she is asleep, but Monsieur can go in."

He made a few remarks about a door that shut with difficulty, the noise of which might awaken the sick woman ; then entered the chamber of Fantine, approached her bed, and opened the curtains. She was sleeping. Her breath came from her chest with that tragic sound which is peculiar to these diseases, and which rends the heart of unhappy mothers, watching the slumbers of their fated children. But this laboured respiration scarcely disturbed an ineffable serenity, which overshadowed her countenance, and transfigured her in her sleep. Her pallor had become whiteness, and her cheeks were glowing. Her long, fair eyelashes, the only beauty left to her of her maidenhood and youth, quivered as they lay closed upon her cheek. Her whole person trembled as if with the fluttering of wings which were felt, but could not be seen, and which seemed about to unfold and bear her away. To see her thus, no one could have believed that her life was despaired of. She looked more as if about to soar away than to die.

The stem, when the hand is stretched out to pluck the flower, quivers, and it seems at once to shrink back, and present itself. The human body has something of this trepidation at the moment when the mysterious fingers of death are about to gather the soul.

Monsieur Madeleine remained for some time motionless

near the bed, looking by turns at the patient and the crucifix, as he had done two months before, on the day when he came for the first time to see her in this asylum. They were still there, both in the same attitude, she sleeping, he praying ; only now, after these two months had rolled away, her hair was grey and his was white.

The Sister had not entered with him. He stood by the bed, with his finger on his lips, as if there were some one in the room to silence. She opened her eyes, saw him, and said tranquilly, with a smile :

“And Cosette?”

## II.

### FANTINE HAPPY.

SHE did not start with surprise or joy ; she was joy itself. The simple question : “And Cosette ?” was asked with such deep faith, with so much certainty, with so complete an absence of disquiet or doubt, that he could find no word in reply. She continued :

“I knew that you were there ; I was asleep, but I saw you. I have seen you for a long time ; I have followed you with my eyes the whole night. You were in a halo of glory, and all manner of celestial forms were hovering around you !”

He raised his eyes towards the crucifix.

“But tell me, where is Cosette ?” she resumed. “Why not put her on my bed that I might see her the instant I woke ?”

He answered something mechanically, which he could never afterwards recall.

Happily, the physician had come and had been apprised of this. He came to the aid of M. Madeleine.

“My child,” said he, “be calm, your daughter is here.”

The eyes of Fantine beamed with joy, and lighted up her

whole countenance. She clasped her hands with an expression full of the most violent and most gentle entreaty :

“ Oh ! ” she exclaimed, “ bring her to me ! ”

Touching illusion of the mother ! Cosette was still to her a little child to be carried in the arms.

“ Not yet,” continued the physician, “ not at this moment. You have some fever still. The sight of your child will agitate you, and make you worse. We must cure you first.”

She interrupted him impetuously.

“ But I am cured ! I tell you I am cured ! Is this physician a fool ? I will see my child ! ”

“ You see how you are carried away ! ” said the physician. “ So long as you are in this state, I cannot let you have your child. It is not enough to see her, you must live for her. When you are reasonable, I will bring her to you myself.”

The poor mother bowed her head.

“ Sir, I ask your pardon. I sincerely ask your pardon. Once I would not have spoken as I have now, but so many misfortunes have befallen me that sometimes I do not know what I am saying. I understand, you fear excitement ; I will wait as long as you wish, but I am sure that it will not harm me to see my daughter. I see her now, I have not taken my eyes from her since last night. Let them bring her to me now, and I will just speak to her very gently. That is all. Is it not very natural that I should wish to see my child, when they have been to Montfermeil on purpose to bring her to me ? I am not angry. I know that I am going to be very happy. All night, I saw figures in white, smiling on me. As soon as the doctor pleases, he can bring Cosette. My fever is gone, for I am cured ; I feel that there is scarcely anything the matter with me ; but I will act as if I were ill, and will not stir so as to please the ladies here. When they see that I am calm, they will say : ‘ You must give her the child.’ ”

M. Madeleine was sitting in a chair by the side of the bed. She turned towards him, and made visible efforts to appear calm and "very good," as she said, in that weakness of disease which resembles childhood, so that, seeing her so peaceful, there should be no objection to bringing her Cosette. Nevertheless, although restraining herself, she could not help addressing a thousand questions to M. Madeleine,

"Did you have a pleasant journey, Monsieur the Mayor? Oh! how good you have been to go for her! Tell me only how she is! Did she bear the journey well? Ah! she will not know me. In all this time, she has forgotten me, poor kitten! Children have no memory. They are like birds. To-day they see one thing, and to-morrow another, and remember nothing. Tell me only, were her clothes clean? Did those Thenardiers keep her neat? How did they feed her? Oh, if you knew how I have suffered in asking myself all these things in the time of my wretchedness! Now, it is past. I am happy. Oh! how I want to see her! Monsieur the Mayor, did you think her pretty? Is not my daughter beautiful? You must have been very cold in the diligence? Could they not bring her here for one little moment? they might take her away immediately. Say! you are master here, are you willing?"

He took her hand. "Cosette is beautiful," said he. "Cosette is well; you shall see her soon, but be quiet. You talk too fast; and then you throw your arms out of bed, which makes you cough."

In fact, coughing fits interrupted Fantine at almost every word.

She did not murmur; she feared that by too eager entreaties she had weakened the confidence which she wished to inspire, and began to talk about indifferent subjects.

"Montfermeil is a pretty place, is it not? In summer

people go there on pleasure parties. Do the Thenardiers do a good business? Not many great people pass through that country. Their inn is a kind of chop-house."

Monsieur Madeleine still held her hand, and looked at her with anxiety. It was evident that he had come to tell her things before which his mind now hesitated. The physician had made his visit and retired. Sister Simplice alone remained with them.

But in the midst of the silence, Fantine cried out :

"I hear her! Oh, darling! I hear her!"

There was a child playing in the court—the child of the portress or some workwoman. It was one of those chances which are always met with, and which seem to make part of the mysterious representation of tragic events. The child, which was a little girl, was running up and down to keep herself warm, singing and laughing in a loud voice. Alas! with what are not the plays of children mingled! Fantine had heard this little girl singing.

"Oh!" said she, "it is my Cosette! I know her voice!"

The child departed as she had come, and the voice died away. Fantine listened for some time. A shadow came over her face, and Monsieur Madeleine heard her whisper, "How wicked it is of that doctor not to let me see my child! That man has a bad face!"

But yet her happy train of thought returned. With her head on the pillow she continued to talk to herself. "How happy we shall be! We will have a little garden in the first place; Monsieur Madcleine has promised it to me. My child will play in the garden. She must know her letters now. I will teach her to spell. She will chase the butterflies in the grass, and I will watch her. Then there will be her first communion. Ah! when will her first communion be?"

She began to count on her fingers.

"One, two, thrcce, four. She is seven years old. In five

years. She will have a white veil and open-worked stockings, and will look like a little lady. Oh, my good Sister, you do not know how foolish I am; here I am thinking of my child's first communion!"

And she began to laugh.

He had let go the hand of Fantine. He listened to the words as one listens to the wind that blows, his eyes on the ground, and his mind plunged into unfathomable reflections. Suddenly, she ceased speaking, and raised her head mechanically. Fantine had become appalling.

She did not speak; she did not breathe; she half-raised herself in the bed, the covering fell from her emaciated shoulders; her countenance, radiant a moment before, became livid, and her eyes, dilated with terror, seemed to fasten on something before her at the other end of the room.

"Good God!" exclaimed he. "What is the matter, Fantine?"

She did not answer; she did not take her eyes from the object which she seemed to see, but touched his arm with one hand, and with the other made a sign to him to look behind him.

He turned, and saw Javert.

### III.

#### JAVERT SATISFIED.

LET us see what had happened.

The half-hour after midnight was striking when M. Madeleine left the hall of the Arras Assizes. He had returned to his inn just in time to take the mail-coach, in which it will be remembered he had retained his seat. A little before six in the morning he had reached M—— sur M——,

where his first care had been to post his letter to M. Lafitte, then to go to the infirmary and visit Fantine.

Meanwhile he had scarcely left the hall of the Court of Assizes when the prosecuting attorney, recovering from his first shock, addressed the court, deplored the insanity of the honourable Mayor of M—— sur M——, declaring that his convictions were in no wise modified by this singular incident, which would be explained hereafter, and demanding the conviction of this Champmathieu, who was evidently the real Jean Valjean. The persistence of the prosecuting attorney was visibly in contradiction to the sentiment of all—the public, the court, and the jury. The counsel for the defence had little difficulty in answering this harangue, and establishing that, in consequence of the revelations of M. Madeleine—that is, of the real Jean Valjean—the aspect of the case was changed, entirely changed, from top to bottom, and that the jury now had before them an innocent man. The counsel drew from this a few passionate appeals, unfortunately not very new, in regard to judicial errors, etc., etc.; the judge, in his summing up, sided with the defence; and the jury, after a few moments' consultation, acquitted Champmathieu.

But yet the prosecuting attorney must have a Jean Valjean, and having lost Champmathieu, he took Madeleine.

Immediately upon the discharge of Champmathieu the prosecuting attorney closeted himself with the judge. The subject of their conference was, “Of the necessity of the arrest of the person of Monsieur the Mayor of M—— sur M——.” This sentence, in which there is a great deal of *es*, is the prosecuting attorney’s, written by his own hand, on the minutes of his report to the Attorney-general.

The first sensation being over, the judge made few objections. Justice must take its course. Then to confess the truth, although the judge was a kind man, and really

intelligent, he was at the same time a strong, almost a zealous royalist, and had been shocked when the Mayor of M—— sur M——, in speaking of the debarkation at Cannes, said the *Emperor*, instead of *Buonaparte*.

The order of arrest was therefore granted. The prosecuting attorney sent it to M—— sur M——, by a courier, at full speed, to police inspector Javert.

It will be remembered that Javert had returned to M—— sur M——, immediately after giving his testimony.

Javert was just rising when the courier brought him the warrant and order of arrest.

The courier was himself a policeman, and an intelligent man; who, in three words, acquainted Javert with what had happened at Arras.

The order of arrest, signed by the prosecuting attorney, was couched in these terms:—

“ Inspector Javert will seize the body of Sieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——, who has this day been identified in court as the discharged convict Jean Valjean.”

One who did not know Javert, on seeing him as he entered the hall of the infirmary, could have divined nothing of what was going on, and would have thought his manner the most natural imaginable. He was cool, calm, grave; his grey hair lay perfectly smooth over his temples, and he had ascended the stairway with his customary deliberation. But one who knew him thoroughly and examined him with attention, would have shuddered. The buckle of his leather cravat, instead of being on the back of his neck, was under his left ear. This denoted an unheard of agitation.

Javert was a complete character, without a wrinkle in his duty or his uniform, methodical with villains, rigid with the buttons of his coat.

For him to misplace the buckle of his cravat, he must

have received one of those shocks which may well be the earthquakes of the soul.

He came unostentatiously, had taken a corporal and four soldiers from a station-house near-by, had left the soldiers in the court, and had been shown to Fantine's chamber by the portress, without suspicion, accustomed as she was to see armed men asking for the Mayor.

On reaching the room of Fantine, Javert turned the key, pushed open the door with the gentleness of a sick-nurse, or a police spy, and entered.

Properly speaking, he did not enter. He remained standing in the half-open door, his hat on his head, and his left hand in his overcoat, which was buttoned to the chin. In the bend of his elbow might be seen the leaden head of his enormous cane, which disappeared behind him.

He remained thus for nearly a minute, unperceived. Suddenly, Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and caused Monsieur Madeleine to turn round.

At the moment when the glance of Madeleine encountered that of Javert, Javert, without stirring, without moving, without approaching, became terrible. No human feeling can ever be so appalling as joy.

It was the face of a demon who had again found his victim.

The certainty that he had caught Jean Valjean at last, brought forth upon his countenance all that was in his soul. The disturbed depths rose to the surface. The humiliation of having lost the scent for a little while, of having been mistaken for a few moments concerning Champmathieu, was lost in the pride of having divined so well at first, and having so long retained a true instinct. The satisfaction of Javert shone forth in his commanding attitude. The deformity of triumph spread over his narrow forehead. It was the fullest development of horror that a gratified face can show.

Javert was at this moment in heaven. Without clearly defining his own feelings, yet notwithstanding with a confused intuition of his necessity and his success, he, Javert, personified justice, light, and truth, in their celestial function as destroyers of evil. He was surrounded and supported by infinite depths of authority, reason, precedent, legal conscience, the vengeance of the law, all the stars in the firmament; he protected order, he hurled forth the thunder of the law, he avenged society, he lent aid to the absolute; he stood erect in a halo of glory; there was in his victory a reminder of defiance and of combat; standing haughty, resplendent, he displayed in full glory the superhuman beastliness of a ferocious archangel; the fearful shadow of the deed which he was accomplishing, made visible in his clenched fist, the uncertain flashes of the social sword; happy and indignant, he had set his heel on crime, vice, rebellion, perdition, and hell, he was radiant, exterminating, smiling; there was an incontestable grandeur in this monstrous St. Michael.

Javert, though hideous, was not ignoble.

Probity, sincerity, candour, conviction, the idea of duty, are things which, mistaken, may become hideous, but which, even though hideous, remain great; their majesty, peculiar to the human conscience, continues in all their horror; they are virtues with a single vice—error. The pitiless, sincere joy of a fanatic in an act of atrocity preserves an indescribably mournful radiance which inspires us with veneration. Without suspecting it, Javert, in his fear-inspiring happiness, was pitiable, like every ignorant man who wins a triumph. Nothing could be more painful and terrible than this face, which revealed what we may call all the evil of good.

## IV

## AUTHORITY RESUMES ITS SWAY.

FANTINE had not seen Javert since the day the Mayor had wrested her from him. Her sick brain accounted for nothing, only she was sure that he had come for her. She could not endure this hideous face, she felt as if she were dying, she hid her face with both hands, and shrieked in anguish :

“ Monsieur Madeleine, save me ! ”

Jean Valjean, we shall call him by no other name henceforth, had risen. He said to Fantine in his gentlest and calmest tone :

“ Be composed ; it is not for you that he comes.”

He then turned to Javert and said :

“ I know what you want.”

Javert answered :

“ Hurry along.”

There was in the manner in which these two words were uttered, an inexpressible something which reminded you of a wild beast and of a madman. Javert did not say “ Hurry along ! ” he said : “ Hurr-long ! ” No orthography can express the tone in which this was pronounced ; it ceased to be human speech ; it was a howl.

He did not go through the usual ceremony ; he made no words ; he showed no warrant. To him Jean Valjean was a sort of mysterious and intangible antagonist, a shadowy wrestler with whom he had been struggling for five years, without being able to throw him. This arrest was not a beginning, but an end. He only said : “ Hurry along ! ”

While speaking thus, he did not stir a step, but cast upon

Jean Valjean a look like a noose, with which he was accustomed to draw the wretched to him by force.

It was the same look which Fantine had felt penetrate to the very marrow of her bones, two months before.

At the exclamation of Javert, Fantine had opened her eyes again. But the Mayor was there, what could she fear?

Javert advanced to the middle of the chamber, exclaiming :

“ Hey, there ; are you coming ?”

The unhappy woman looked around her. There was no one but the nun and the Mayor. To whom could this contemptuous familiarity be addressed ? To herself alone. She shuddered.

Then she saw a mysterious thing, so mysterious that its like had never appeared to her in the darkest delirium of fever.

She saw the spy Javert seize Monsieur the Mayor by the collar ; she saw Monsieur the Mayor bow his head. The world seemed vanishing before her sight.

Javert, in fact, had taken Jean Valjean by the collar.

“ Monsieur the Mayor !” cried Fantine.

Javert burst into a horrid laugh, displaying all his teeth.

“ There is no Monsieur the Mayor here any longer !” said he.

Jean Valjean did not attempt to disturb the hand which grasped the collar of his coat. He said :

“ Javert——”

Javert interrupted him : “ Call me Monsieur the Inspector !”

“ Monsieur,” continued Jean Valjean, “ I would like to speak a word with you in private.”

“ Aloud, speak aloud,” said Javert, “ people speak aloud to me.”

Jean Valjean went on, lowering his voice.

“It is a request that I have to make of you——”

“I tell you to speak aloud.”

“But this should not be heard by any one but yourself.”

“What is that to me? I will not listen.”

Jean Valjean turned to him and said rapidly and in a very low tone :

“Give me three days! Three days to go for the child of this unhappy woman! I will pay whatever is necessary. You shall accompany me if you like.”

“Are you laughing at me!” cried Javert. “Hey! I did not think you so stupid! You ask for three days to get away, and tell me that you are going for this girl’s child! Ha, ha, that’s good! That is good!”

Fantine shivered.

“My child!” she exclaimed, “going for my child! Then she is not here! Sister, tell me, where is Cosette? I want my child! Monsieur Madeleine, Monsieur the Mayor!”

Javert stamped his foot.

“There is the other now! Hold your tongue, hussy! Miserable country, where galley slaves are magistrates and women of the town are nursed like countesses! Ha, but all this will be changed; it was time!”

He gazed steadily at Fantine, and added, grasping anew the cravat, shirt, and coat collar of Jean Valjean:

“I tell you that there is no Monsieur Madeleine, and that there is no Monsieur the Mayor. There is a robber, there is a brigand, there is a convict called Jean Valjean, and I have got him. That is what there is!”

Fantine started upright, supporting herself by her rigid arms and hands; she looked at Jean Valjean, then at Javert, and then at the nun; she opened her mouth as if to speak; a rattle came from her throat, her teeth struck together, she stretched out her arms in anguish, convulsively opening her hands, and groping about her like one who is drowning; then sank suddenly back upon the pillow.

Her head struck the head of the bed and fell forward on her breast, the mouth gaping, the eyes open and glazed.

She was dead.

Jean Valjean put his hand on that of Javert which held him, and opened it as he would have opened the hand of a child ; then he said :

“ You have killed this woman.”

“ Have done with this ! ” cried Javert, furious, “ I am not here to listen to sermons ; save all that ; the guard is below ; come right along, or the handcuffs ! ”

There stood in the corner of the room an old iron bedstead in a dilapidated condition, which the Sisters used as a camp-bed when they watched. Jean Valjean went to the bed, wrenched out the rickety head bar, a thing easy for muscles like his—in the twinkling of an eye, and with the bar in his clenched fist, looked at Javert. Javert recoiled towards the door.

Jean Valjean, his iron bar in hand, walked slowly towards the bed of Fantine. On reaching it, he turned and said to Javert in a voice that could scarcely be heard :

“ I advise you not to disturb me now.”

Nothing is more certain than that Javert trembled.

He had an idea of calling the guard, but Jean Valjean might profit by his absence to escape. He remained therefore, grasped the bottom of his cane, and leaned against the framework of the door without taking his eyes from Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean rested his elbow upon the post, and his head upon his hand, and gazed at Fantine, stretched motionless before him. He remained thus, mute and absorbed, evidently lost to everything of this life. His countenance and attitude bespoke nothing but inexpressible pity.

After a few moments’ reverie, he bent down to Fantine, and addressed her in a whisper.

What did he say? What could this condemned man say to this dead woman? What were these words? They were heard by none on earth. Did the dead woman hear them? There are touching illusions which perhaps are sublime realities. One thing is beyond doubt: Sister Simplex, the only witness of what passed, has often related that, at the moment when Jean Valjean whispered in the ear of Fantine, she distinctly saw an ineffable smile beam on those pale lips and in those dim eyes, full of the wonder of the tomb.

Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in his hands and arranged it on the pillow, as a mother would have done for her child, then fastened the string of her night-dress, and replaced her hair beneath her cap. This done, he closed her eyes.

The face of Fantine, at this instant, seemed strangely illumined.

Death is the entrance into the great light.

Fantine's hand hung over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt before this hand, raised it gently, and kissed it.

Then he rose, and, turning to Javert, said:

"Now, I am at your disposal."

## V

### A FITTING TOMB.

JAVERT put Jean Valjean in the city prison.

The arrest of Monsieur Madeleine produced a sensation, or rather an extraordinary commotion, at M—— sur M——. We are sorry not to be able to disguise the fact that, on this single sentence, *he was a galley slave*, almost everybody abandoned him. In less than two hours, all the good he had done was forgotten, and he was "nothing but a galley

slave." It is just to say that the details of the scene at Arras were not yet known. All day long, conversations like this were heard in every part of the town : "Don't you know, he was a discharged convict!" "He ! Who?" "The mayor." "Bah ! Monsieur Madeleine." "Yes." "Indeed!" "His name was not Madeleine; he has a horrid name, Béjean, Bojean, Bonjean !" "Oh ! bless me !" "He has been arrested." "Arrested !" "In prison, in the city prison to await his removal." "His removal ! where will he be taken?" "To the Court of Assizes for a highway robbery that he once committed." "Well ! I always did suspect him. The man was too good, too perfect, too sweet. He refused fees, and gave sous to every little blackguard he met. I always thought that there must be something bad at the bottom of all this."

"The drawing-rooms," above all, were entirely of this opinion.

An old lady, a subscriber to the *Drapeau Blanc*, made this remark, the depth of which it is almost impossible to fathom :

"I am not sorry for it. That will teach the Bonapartists!"

In this manner the phantom which had been called Monsieur Madeleine, was dissipated at M—— sur M——. Three or four persons alone in the whole city remained faithful to his memory. The old portress who had been his servant was among the number.

On the evening of this same day, the worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still quite bewildered and sunk in sad reflections. The factory had been closed all day, the carriage doors were bolted, the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice, who were watching the corpse of Fantine.

Towards the time when Monsieur Madeleine had been

accustomed to return, the honest portress rose mechanically, took the key of his room from a drawer, with the taper stand that he used at night to light himself up the stairs, then hung the key on a nail from which he had been in the habit of taking it, and placed the taper-stand by its side, as if she were expecting him. She then seated herself again in her chair, and resumed her reflections. The poor old woman had done all this without being conscious of it.

More than two hours had elapsed when she started from her reverie and exclaimed, “Why, bless me ! I have hung his key on the nail !”

Just then, the window of her box opened, a hand passed through the opening, took the key and stand, and lighted the taper at the candle which was burning.

The portress raised her eyes ; she was transfixed with astonishment ; a cry rose to her lips, but she could not give it utterance.

She knew the hand, the arm, the coat-sleeve.

It was M. Madeleine.

She was speechless for some seconds ; thunderstruck, as she said herself, afterwards, in giving her account of the affair.

“My God ! Monsieur Mayor !” she exclaimed, “I thought you were——”

She stopped ; the end of her sentence would not have been respectful to the beginning. To her, Jean Valjean was still Monsieur the Mayor.

He completed her thought.

“In prison,” said he. “I was there ; I broke a bar from a window, let myself fall from the top of a roof, and here I am. I am going to my room ; go for Sister Simplice. She is doubtless beside this poor woman.”

The old servant hastily obeyed.

He gave her no caution, very sure she would guard him better than he would guard himself.

It has never been known how he had succeeded in gaining entrance into the court-yard without opening the carriage door. He had, and always carried about him a pass-key which opened a little side door, but he must have been searched, and this taken from him. This point is not yet cleared up.

He ascended the staircase which led to his room. On reaching the top, he left his taper stand on the upper stair, opened his door with little noise, felt his way to the window and closed the shutter, then came back, took his taper, and went into the chamber.

The precaution was not useless ; it will be remembered that his window could be seen from the street.

He cast a glance about him, over his table, his chair, his bed, which had not been slept in for three days. There remained no trace of the disorder of the night before the last. The portress had “put the room to rights.” Only, she had picked up from the ashes, and laid in order on the table, the ends of the loaded stick, and the forty-sous piece, blackened by the fire.

He took a sheet of paper and wrote : *These are the ends of my loaded stick and the forty-sous piece stolen from Little Gervais, of which I spoke at the Court of Assizes* ; then placed the two bits of iron and the piece of silver on the sheet in such a way that it would be the first thing perceived on entering the room. He took from the wardrobe an old shirt which he tore into several pieces and in which he packed the two silver candlesticks. In all this there was neither haste nor agitation. And even while packing the Bishop’s candlesticks, he was eating a piece of black bread. It was possibly prison bread, which he had brought away in escaping.

This has been established by crumbs of bread found on the floor of the room, when the Court afterwards ordered a search.

Two gentle taps were heard at the door.

“Come in,” said he.

It was Sister Simplice.

She was pale, her eyes were red, and the candle which she held trembled in her hand. The shocks of destiny have this peculiarity ; however subdued or disciplined our feelings may be, they draw out the human nature from the depths of our souls, and compel us to exhibit it to others. In the agitations of this day the nun had again become a woman. She had wept, and she was trembling.

Jean Valjean had written a few lines on a piece of paper, which he handed to the nun, saying : “Sister, you will give this to the curé.”

The paper was not folded. She cast her eyes on it.

“You may read it,” said he.

She read : “I beg Monsieur the Curé to take charge of all that I leave here. He will please defray therefrom the expenses of my trial, and of the burial of the woman who died this morning. The remainder is for the poor.”

The Sister attempted to speak, but could scarcely stammer out a few inarticulate sounds. She succeeded, however, in saying :

“Does not Monsieur the Mayor wish to see this poor unfortunate again for the last time ?”

“No,” said he, “I am pursued; I should only be arrested in her chamber ; it would disturb her.”

He had scarcely finished when there was a loud noise on the staircase. They heard a tumult of steps ascending, and the old portress exclaiming in her loudest and most piercing tones :

“My good sir, I swear to you in the name of God, that nobody has come in here the whole day, and the whole evening ; that I have not even once left my door !”

A man replied: “But yet, there is a light in this room.”

They recognized the voice of Javert.

The chamber was so arranged that the door in opening covered the corner of the wall to the right. Jean Valjean blew out the taper, and placed himself in this corner.

Sister Simplice fell on her knees near the table.

The door opened.

Javert entered.

The whispering of several men, and the protestations of the portress were heard in the hall.

The nun did not raise her eyes. She was praying.

The candle was on the mantel, and gave but a dim light.

Javert perceived the Sister, and stopped abashed.

It will be remembered that the very foundation of Javert, his element, the medium in which he breathed, was veneration for all authority. He was perfectly homogeneous, and admitted of no objection, or abridgment. To him, be it understood, ecclesiastical authority was the highest of all; he was devout, superficial, and correct, upon this point as upon all others. In his eyes, a priest was a spirit who was never mistaken, a nun was a being who never sinned. They were souls walled in from this world, with a single door which never opened but for the exit of truth.

On perceiving the Sister, his first impulse was to retire.

But there was also another duty which held him, and which urged him imperiously in the opposite direction. His second impulse was to remain, and to venture at least one question.

This was the Sister Simplice, who had never lied in her life. Javert knew this, and venerated her especially on account of it.

“Sister,” said he, “are you alone in this room?”

There was a fearful instant during which the poor portress felt her limbs falter beneath her. The Sister raised her eyes, and replied :

“Yes.”

Then continued Javert—"Excuse me if I persist, it is my duty—you have not seen this evening a person, a man—he has escaped, and we are in search of him—Jean Valjean—you have not seen him?"

The Sister answered—"No."

She lied. Two lies in succession, one upon another, without hesitation, quickly, as if she were an adept in it.

"Your pardon!" said Javert, and he withdrew bowing reverently.

Oh, holy maiden! for many years thou hast been no more in this world; thou hast joined the sisters, the virgins, and thy brethren, the angels, in glory; may this falsehood be remembered to thee in Paradise.

The affirmation of the Sister was to Javert something so decisive that he did not even notice the singularity of this taper just blown out, and smoking on the table.

An hour afterwards, a man was walking rapidly in the darkness beneath the trees from M—— sur M——, in the direction of Paris. This man was Jean Valjean. It has been established by the testimony of two or three waggoners who met him that he carried a bundle, and was dressed in a blouse. Where did he get this blouse? It was never known. Nevertheless, an old artisan had died in the infirmary of the factory a few days before, leaving nothing but his blouse. This might have been the one.

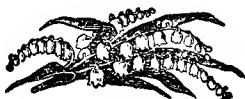
A last word in regard to Fantine.

We have all one mother—the earth. Fantine was restored to this mother.

The Curé thought best, and did well perhaps, to reserve out of what Jean Valjean had left, the largest amount possible for the poor. After all, who were in question?—a convict and a woman of the town. This was why he simplified the burial of Fantine, and reduced it to that bare necessity called the Potter's Field.

And so Fantine was buried in the common grave of the

cemetery, which is for everybody and for all, and in which the poor are lost. Happily, God knows where to find the soul. Fantine was laid away in the darkness with bodies which had no name; she suffered the promiscuity of dust. She was thrown into the public pit. Her tomb was like her bed.





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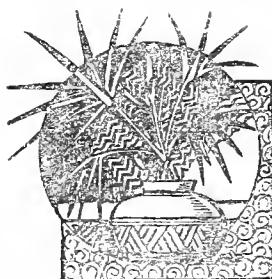
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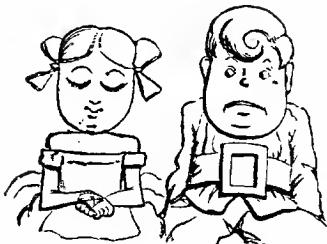
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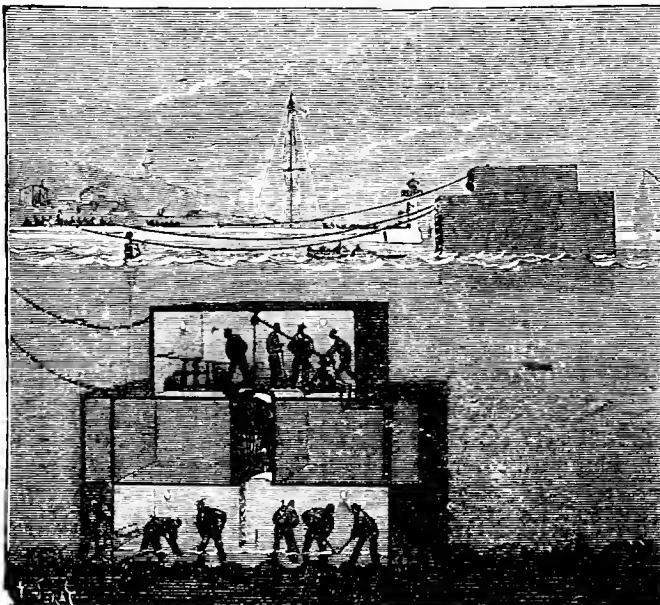
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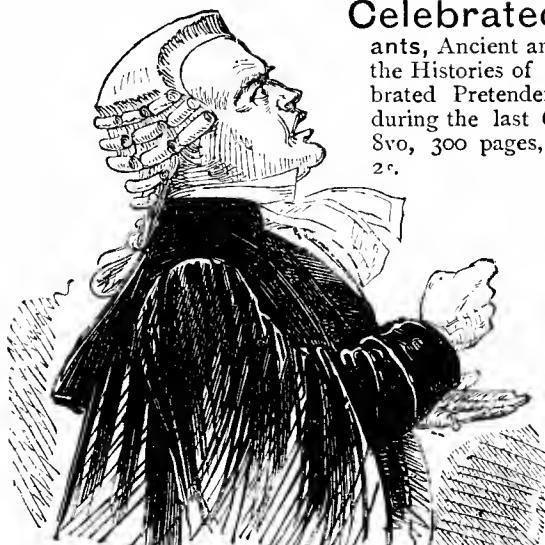
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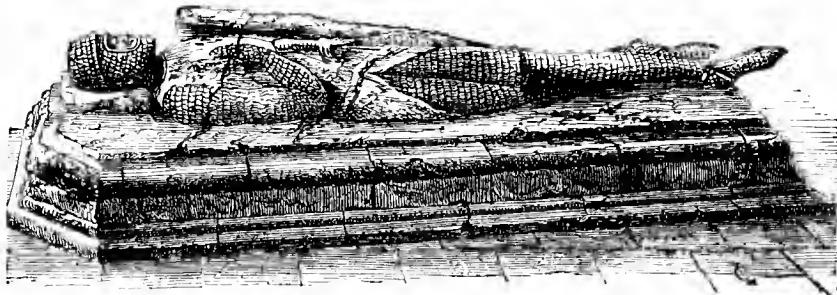
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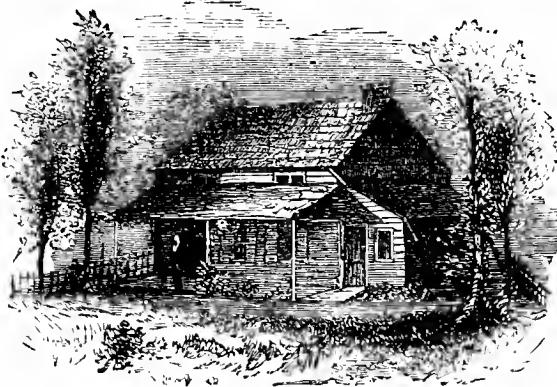
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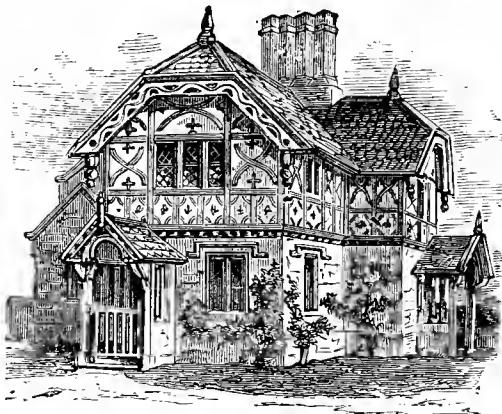
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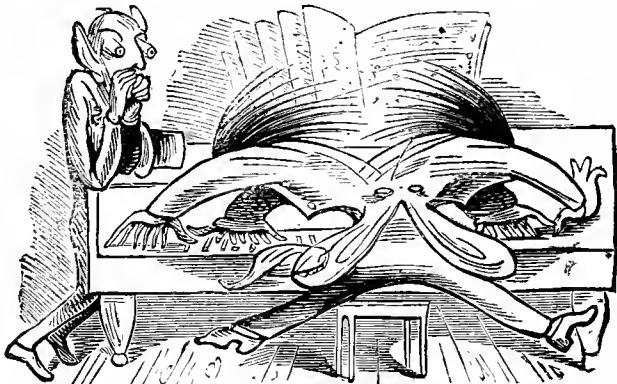
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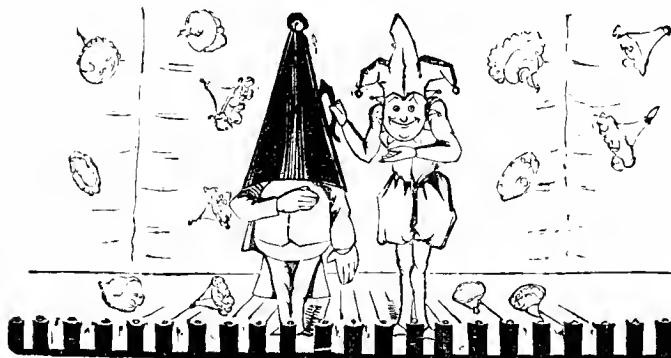
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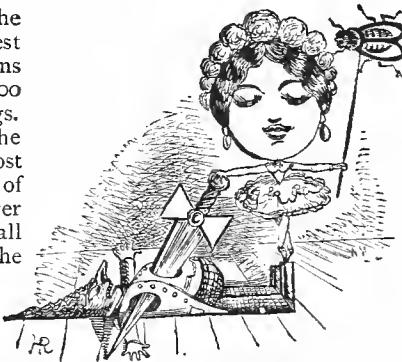


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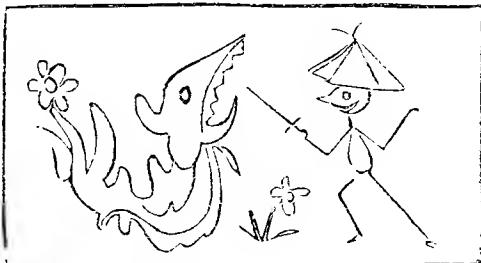
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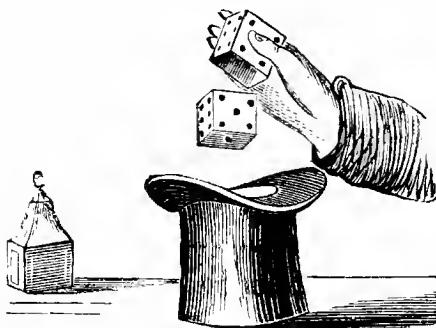
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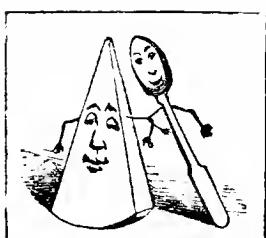
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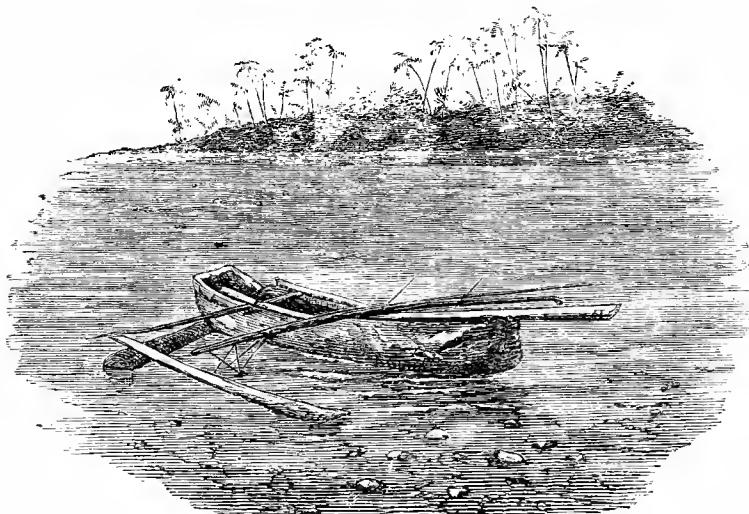
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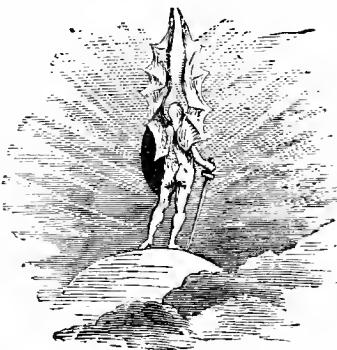
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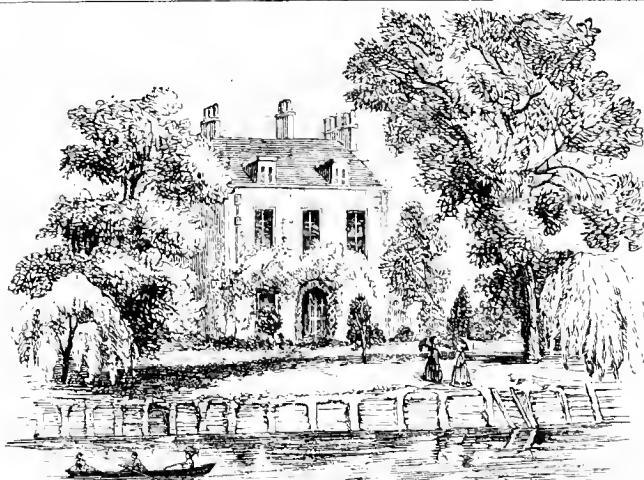
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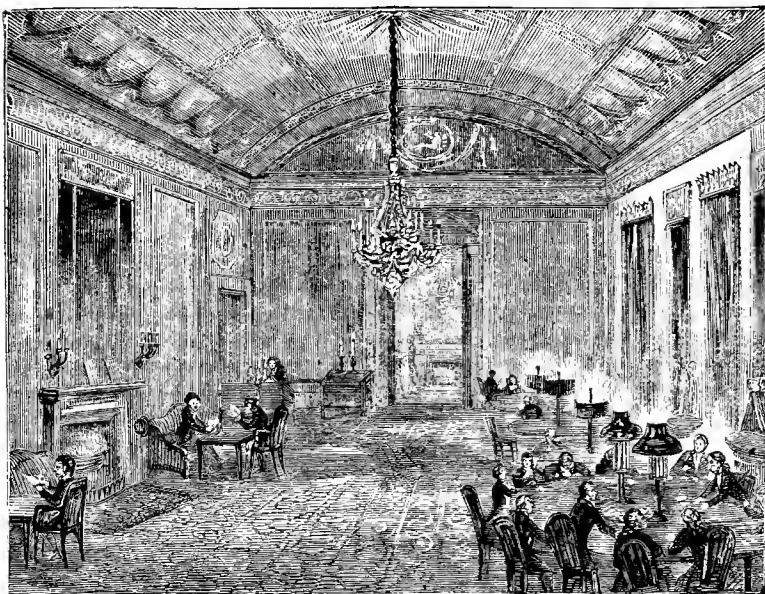
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